GLORIES OF
ISLAM

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

The aim of this anthology is two-fold. In the first place it seeks to remind the Muslims of to-day—and particularly those young men intent on public leadership—of their great and glorious heritage. It is hoped that the brief survey given here of what Islam has already contributed to world civilisation, to education, to culture and to scientific development will awaken the reader to a new pride in his heritage: not, however, to a passive or complacent pride, for no nation can live in its past, but to an active determination to go forward to new greatness. For this reason the second object of this book is to show that what Islam has done in the past it can do again and that the future of Islam is potentially every bit as glorious as its past.

Many Muslims to-day are discouraged. They see how poor the standard of living is for the majority of their fellow-Muslims throughout the world, how limited their opportunities: they also know how undeveloped technology is in the Muslim countries in comparison with the countries of the West. From these observations they leap to the conclusion that the Muslim countries are backward because Islam cannot adapt itself to changing conditions, cannot assimilate new knowledge; they even go so far as to say that Islam is actually against progress and against scientific advancement.

Nothing could be further from the truth as anyone who reads the following extracts can readily determine.

These extracts, which have taken the author many years to collect, are taken mainly from the works of writers who are not Muslims themselves, who have no bias in favour of Islam and whose judgments can be relied on as being both scholarly and objective. These non-Muslims reveal themselves in their writings as being deeply aware of the glorious achievements of Islam in the past: more than that, they are convinced that the Islamic countries may yet play an even more vital role in the future.

The material presented here has been culled from many hundreds of books on a wide variety of subjects; some of it has been taken from learned academic journals and reviews, some from history books, some from works on psychology; some of it comes from more ephemeral publications such as magazines, periodicals and well-informed newspapers. From all this diverse material one truth emerges, namely that it was not Islam which brought about the downfall of the Muslim peoples but the Muslims themselves through their neglect of Islamic principles. Over and over again these excerpts serve to show—and it is for the most part Western writers who are speaking—that Islam is undeniably the most progressive of all the great religions of the world; that it is essentially dynamic and possessed of inherent vitality; that it has the widest scope, is the most all-embracing and the most assimilative of all religions; that it is indestructible and that it carries within itself unequalled powers of re-generation.

"One lesson I have learned from the history of the Muslims", the world-famous poet Iqbal has said "and that is that Islam alone can save them. At critical moments in their history it is Islam that has always saved

the Muslims and not vice-versa. "*If to-day you focus your vision on Islam and seek inspiration from the ever-vitalising ideas embodied in it*, then only will you be able to re-assemble your scattered forces and, by thus recovering your lost integrity, save yourselves from imminent destruction".

The author will think his labour amply rewarded if this anthology helps in any way to fulfil the purpose so nobly expressed in the above quotation. He hopes that it may prove a useful source of inspiration to students at school and in college, to their teachers and professors, to members of the legislature and to all public men and leaders. He hopes, too, that it may serve to redeem some of the younger Muslims from the wrong-headed notion that Islam is revolutionary and a bar to progress.

To all those writers, from many countries and walks of life, whose opinions on the achievements and fundamental teachings of Islam are herewith reproduced, he wishes to express his obligation and gratitude.

NUR AHMAD

PRELIMINARY

ISLAM is a unity, a universal brotherhood. All Muslims, wherever they may happen to live—whether in remotest Siberia, in the heart of Africa, in Indonesia or, singly and in small isolated communities in Europe and America—are alike and equally members of this unique fraternity. Geography is no barrier, neither is distance; caste is no barrier, nor is colour. Islam transcends all those national, geographical, racial and social distinctions which still disfigure the other great religious systems of the world, seeking only to unite each and every Muslim with all others of the same faith.

This faith is the main source of Islamic unity, together with the study of the Arabic language and the Holy Quran. For thirteen hundred years the study of the Holy Quran has kept Muslims the world over united in their religious belief. As the Holy Prophet once said, "The whole world is a mosque".

Religious unity is not, however, the only unity which Islam offers. In addition to its religious code it also gives to all Muslims, irrespective of where they live, a social, political and ethical code as well. It is a comprehensive faith regulating not only the spiritual conduct of the believers but, also, every aspect of their practical daily life. This attention to the practical and ethical details of living greatly strengthens the bonds already forged by religious belief. It is the answer to the question posed by

the German Philosopher, the late Count Keyserling, in his "*Travel Diary of a Philosopher*" (London 1925): Count Keyserling writes :

"Every single Muslim, when I asked him what he was, replied 'I am a Muslim'. *Why has this* religion (Islam) *alone of all religions understood how to substitute for national feeling something wider. And something which is stronger and more significant? How is it that Islam, without a corresponding dogma achieves the ideals of brotherhood, whereas Christianity fails in spite of its ideals?*"

Count Keyserling finds his answer where all the great Islamic Scholars of the West have found their answer, in the way in which Islam integrates the practical and the spiritual sides of man's nature. "It must", the Count goes on to say, "be due to the intimate relations existing between the underlying tendencies of his peculiar faith and the fundamental nature of man".

Everything that a Muslim does is directly related to Islam. More than that, everything that Muslims have achieved in the past and everything that Muslims are to achieve in the future -are equally related to Islam. The purpose of this anthology is to demonstrate that underlying unity of faith, purpose and achievement

For the convenience of the reader this anthology has been divided into three parts, each part in turn being further divided into a number of sections. It should, however, be at all times remembered that no aspect of Islamic achievement can be considered as unrelated to the achievement of Islam as a whole.

Set out in the pages of Part One the reader will see tributes to world-famous Muslim scientists and also

to the skill and craftsmanship of unknown Muslim weavers and metal-workers; he will read of the bravery of Muslim sailors and of the forbearance of victorious Muslim warriors. The knowledge and wisdom of Muslim educationists is here distilled for him to sample and he is invited to rejoice at the philanthropic spirit which prompted the building of some of the greatest educational institutions that the world has known.

In Part Two of this Anthology the reader can study the contribution made by the Islamic spirit of tolerance to justice and good administration; to democracy and the most advanced forms of internationalism—in sum to Human Rights.

These extracts make interesting reading in themselves but the purpose of this book will have been served only if the reader, as he re-discovers his Islamic heritage, goes on to ask himself one question—"What have all these glorious achievements to do with me, to-day".

To this question author believes this book can supply an answer. Surely those who read the first two parts will feel, stirring within themselves, the desire to be part of an Islamic future no less glorious than the Islamic past. It is with the possibilities of that future that Part Three of this anthology is concerned. Here the excerpts have been chosen to show how the seeds of regeneration are inherent in Islam and how the power of re-vitalising Islam lies within every single member of the Islamic brotherhood. In the words of the distinguished scholar, Professor Bosworth Smith:

"Islam itself is a thing of indestructible vitality." While the Philosopher, Mr. W. E. Hocking makes this claim:

"I feel justified in my assertion that Islam contains in abundance the necessary principles for its growth".

Let there be no more talk, then, of the backwardness of Muslim nations. Instead let us look towards a future in which Islam is, once again, a vital and dynamic world Force.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ISLAM TO SCIENCE

ONE of the most frequent criticisms levelled against Islam, by people ignorant of its true principles, is that Islam is opposed to the study and development of the sciences. History tells a very different story and many Western scholars have acknowledged in full the tremendous debt which Western Science owes to Muslim scientists.

In his famous book "The Making of Humanity" the Frenchman Monsieur Briffault says, "For although, there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic culture is not traceable, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the permanent distinctive force of the modern world, and the supreme source of victory—*natural science and the scientific spirit.*"

In the opinion of the German Scholar, Humboldt the Arab scholars should be considered, "the proper Founders of physical science in the significance of the term as we are nowadays accustomed to use it".*

George Sarton, a Science historian, pays a glowing tribute to Muslim scholars as under.

"The most valuable of all, the most original and the most pregnant works were written in Arabic. From the second half of the Eighth to the end of the Eleventh century, Arabic was the scientific, the progressive language of mankind. During that period any one wishing to be well-informed and up-to-date had to study Arabic. It will

*Kosmos, Vol. II.

suffice here to evoke a few glorious names without contemporary equivalents, in the West: Jabir bin Hayyan, al-Kindi, al-Khwarizmi, al-Farghani, al-Razi, Thabit bin Qurra, al-Battani, Hunain ibn Ishaq, al-Farabi, Ibrahim ibn Sinan, al-Masudi, al-Tabari, Abul-Wafa, Ali-ibn-Abbas, Abul Qasim, Ibn-al-Jazzar,* al-Beruni, Ibn Sina, Ibn Yunus, al-Karkhi, Ibn-al-Haitham, Ali Ibn Isa, al-Ghazali, al-Zarqali, Omar Khayyam—a magnificent array of names which it would not be difficult to extend. If any one tells you that the Middle Ages were scientifically sterile, just quote these names to him. All these scientists flourished within a relatively short period between 750 and 1100 A.C."

In his "History of the Arabs", Philip Hitti says, "Muslim Spain wrote one of the brightest chapters in the intellectual history of medieval Europe Between the middle of the Eighth and the beginning of the Thirteenth centuries....the Arabic-speaking peoples were the main bearers of the torch of culture and civilisation throughout the world Moreover they were the medium through which ancient science and philosophy were recovered, supplemented and transmitted in such a way as to make possible the Renaissance of Western Europe."†

It should be noted to the eternal glory of medieval Islam that it succeeded for the first time in the history of human thought in harmonising and reconciling monotheism, the greatest contribution of the ancient semitic world, with Greek philosophy, the greatest contribution

*Ibn al-Jazzar, who is known as Ahmad ibn al-Darraz was a great poet and political leader during the reign of Cordovan King al-Mansur

†P. 557.

of the first order and they showed from this time forward a real aptitude for exact science."

"It must be owned" says Mosheim the author of 'Ecclesiastical History' "that all the knowledge, whether of physics, astronomy, philosophy, or mathematics or chemistry which flourished in Europe from the Tenth Century was originally derived from the Arabian scholars."

A veteran German scholar, Julius Ruska of the University of Berlin says, "Arabic Alchemy developed so much and in so peculiar a way beyond that of the Greeks and so exclusively influenced occidental alchemy that students of the medieval sciences to-day could not find a more attractive task than to trace the path, until recently obscured, which the development once followed."

John W. Campbell Junior, writing in the "Islamic Review" of March 1958 says, "Islam achieved what no other nation had attempted, let alone managed to do; it invented science. Rome did not. Greece did not. They had each produced one of the two ingredients necessary to the habit of scientific thought as indeed other nations had done before them and were to do, independently, after them, but neither had succeeded in achieving both. Philosophy is fine, but it cannot stand alone. Athens fell flat on its beautiful, philosophical face for lack of an even passable sewage and water-system. Rome had a magnificent system of sanitary engineering but no system of philosophic thought. Rome had no respect for the airy-fairy philosophy of Greece nor Greece for the harsh materialism of Rome.

We did not get our scientific legacy from either Rome or Greece but from Islam. *Islam invented science.*"

Mr. Campbell thinks that one reason why so many people have remained in ignorance of Islamic achievements in society is that, by the time Europe emerged from the Dark Ages, Rome and Greece were no longer—as once they had been the enemies of Christendom. By the year 1400 it was Islam that had become the enemy. How much more pleasant, therefore, for Renaissance Europe to dwell on the ancient wisdom of Greece and Rome than to admit that most of the credit for the development of the sciences should be given to its enemy, Islam.

Mr. Draper, in his "History of the Intellectual Development of Europe"* corroborates Mr Campbell's statement in these words. "The Arabian conquerors were able to make Egypt once more illustrious among the nations of the Earth to snatch it from the hideous fanaticism, ignorance and barbarism into which it had been plunged (by the Christian rule). *The works of the sages of ancient Greece were not only collected and preserved by the Arabs, they were profusely commented and improved upon.* Complete works of Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Appolonius, Ptolemy, Hyppocrate and Galen were available to the fathers of the modern Europe at first only in Arabic version, accompanied by erudite commentaries Modern Europe learned from the Arabs not only medicine and mathematics—the science of astronomy which widens the vision of men and reveals before them the mechanical laws of nature was jealously cultivated by the Arabs. With the aid of new instruments of

*Page 325.

observation, Arab philosophers acquired exact knowledge about the circumference of the earth, the position and the number of planets. The science of chemistry owes its origin and development to the industry of Arabs."

Mr. Robert Briffault, already quoted above, also supports Mr. Campbell's views, saying that science is indebted to the Arabs for its very existence.

"The debt of science to the Arabs", says Briffault, "does not consist in startling discoveries or revolutionary theories; science owes a great deal more to the Arabs, it owes its existence. What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of scientific enquiry, of new methods of investigations and experiment and new habits of observation unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and these methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs. Science was the most momentous contribution of the Arab Civilization to the modern world, but its fruits were slow in ripening. Not until long after Moorish culture had sunk back into darkness did the giant to which it had given birth rise in might."

Another scholar compares the scientific achievements of Islam with the backwardness of the Indians in the same field.

He says, "The principle of acquiring exact knowledge, stated a thousand years ago by the Muslim savants holds as good now as then but the scientific outlook, which makes such knowledge possible, is still comparatively rare among the Indians who, even in these days of the Twentieth Century, allow themselves to be imposed on by feats of magic and spiritual charlatanism and credit them [illegible] challenges to the [illegible] knowledge."

In one of the 1955 issues of, "The Reader's Digest" a writer relates an anecdote which well illustrates the rational, objective and, therefore, truly scientific approach that Islam has always sought to inculcate.

In all things, Muhammad was profoundly practical. When his beloved son Ibrahim died, an eclipse occurred and rumours of God's personal condolence quietly arose, whereupon Muhammad is said to have announced "An eclipse is a phenomenon of Nature. It is foolish to attribute such things to the birth or death of a human being."

Another European, also discussing the earliest days of Islam, says, "It was the glory of Islam that it gave to the sciences the same footing which it gave to the study of the Quran and Hadith and Fiqh, a place in the Mosque. The Mosque it must be remembered was the University of Islam in her great days. Lectures in Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Medicine, Astronomy, Philosophy, etc., were all delivered there in the Mosque."

Under such circumstances it is hardly surprising to learn that "there is not one single sentence in the Quran or the Hadith that could debar one single Muslim from free investigation of the workings of Nature". To this statement a long list of Muslim achievements in many branches of Science bears the most eloquent testimony. In their, "General History of Europe", Thatcher and Schwill give an impressive summary of the main achievements thus:

"In Mathematics the Arabs built on the foundations of the Greeks. The Zero was invented by the Arab Mathematician, Muhammad Ibn Musa, who was also the first to use decimal notation and who gave the digits the

value of position. The Arabs developed spherical trigonometry inventing the sine, tangent and co-tangent. In Physics they invented the pendulum, and produced works on optics. They made progress in the science of astronomy. They built several observatories and constructed many astronomical instruments which are still in use. They calculated the angle of the ecliptic and the position of the equinoxes. Their knowledge of astronomy was undoubtedly considerable. In medicine, they made great advance over the works of the Greeks. They studied physiology and hygiene and their materia medica was practically the same as that of our today. Many of their methods of treatment are still in use among us. Their surgeons understood the use of anaesthetics and performed some of the most difficult operations known. At the time when in Europe the practice of medicine was forbidden by the Church, which expected cures to be effected by religious rites performed by the clergy, the Arabs had a real science of medicine. . ."

Although in these early days of Scientific Discovery knowledge could not readily be divided into water-tight compartments it will, I think, make easier for the reader to assess the value and variety of Muslim research if some of the achievements are listed under separate headings, namely Mathematics (Pure and Applied), Mechanics, Physics and Optics; Astronomy; Chemistry, Geography, including Cartography and the Science of Navigation, Botany; and, finally, the field in which the most far-reaching of all Muslim contributions were made Medicine.

Mathematics

Perhaps the greatest name in the early history of Mathematics is that of al-Khwarizmi Muhammad Ibn Musa (780-850 A.C.) thought to be the author of the earliest work on Algebra. His work "Hisab-al-Jab -wal-Muqabalah, (the calculation of Integration and Equation) presented eight hundred examples. In the Twelfth Century it was translated from the Arabic into Latin and from then on until the Sixteenth Century was Europe's main text-book on the subject. His work was also responsible for the introduction into Europe of the Arabic numerals called Algorism.

Another great mathematician was Omar al-Khayyam whose work offered geometric as well as algebraic solutions of equations of the second degree and who puts on record the originality of his work in these words: "No work of the Ancients, dealing with these problems, has come down to me."

Nasiruddin wrote a "Treatise on the Quadrilateral" as well as works of trigonometry and plane and spherical geometry.

Kamaluddin examined the refraction of sun-light in rain drops and offered an explanation of the genesis of primary and secondary rainbows.

Mechanics

The Muslims excelled in Applied as well as in Pure Mathematics, doing outstanding work in Mechanics.

Dr. H. J. Winter, a Doctor of Science and lecturer in Education at University College Exeter, England, writes in an article entitled "Muslim Mechanics and Mechanical Appliances" as follows:—

treatises on Mechanics. It is a most comprehensive work, dealing with the principle of accurate weighing and the determination of specific gravities, with geodesy, with floating and even with some discussion about gravitation.

In another book on Balance al-Khazini shows himself aware of the need to remove, as far as possible the influences of temperature variation when weighing. In other studies Khazini shows himself as the precursor of Galileo.

Before Khazini, the greatest work on Balance was undoubtedly that of Omar Khayyam. Ibn Sina had done much work in the theoretical field as had also Muhammad Ibn Zakariyya of Ray. After Khayyam came the work of al-Muzaffar Ibn Isma'il al-Isfarni. A recently discovered manuscript of the philosopher Abu Nasr al-Farabi shows an interest in physics hitherto unsuspected. In this work al-Farabi refutes the existence of a vacuum; most fascinating is his essay on the elasticity of the air, an entirely original piece of reasoning owing nothing whatsoever to Greek or Latin influences.

Optics

Mr. Max Meyerhoff writes, "The glory of Muslim science is in the field of Optics. Here the mathematical ability of al-Hazen and Kamaluddin outshone that of Euclid and Ptolemy. Real and lasting achievements stand to their credit in this department of science."

Mr. Helmut Gersheim, another German, gives an interesting example of Muslim achievement in another branch of applied mathematics. In his "History of Photography" Mr. Gersheim writes, "The camera obscura was

known to the Arab Scholar, Ibn Haitham, before 1038 A.C."

Indeed every branch of Mathematics seems to have been touched on by those early Muslim thinkers. In an interesting summary Philip Hitti shows how much the mathematical vocabulary of Europe has been influenced by Arab findings in the following passages.

"In the mathematical vocabulary of Europe we have another eloquent witness to Arab scientific influence Other than borrowings, as illustrated by such words as 'algebra' and 'algorism,' certain Arabic terms were translated into Latin. The algebraic term 'surd' meaning 'deaf' is a translation from Arabic *jadhr asamma* (deaf root). In trigonometry 'sine' is likewise a translation from an Arabic word *jaib* (pocket)...One of the most interesting mathematical terms borrowed from Arabic is 'cipher' or 'zero'. The zero and Arabic numerals lie behind the science of calculation as we know it today."

In the light of such achievements surely no one could persist in saying that Islam is against scientific enquiry, particularly when many of the greatest teachers of science were theologians at the same time. Such a one was Hazrat Qazi Abu Bakr of the Eighth Century who, besides teaching theology in the Mosque – University, also used mathematics to develop a theory of relativity in time and space. His conclusions were later verified by another great Muslim Hazrat Mohibullah Saheb Behari of Pabna in the four volumes, Jaharaul Fard (The Essence of Organism by Mathematical Equation and Astro-Physics)

Astronomy

Closely allied with the study of mathematics was the work of the early Arab astronomers. The scientific study of Astronomy began early in Islam with the setting up, in the first years of the Ninth Century, of the first observatory at-Jundaysabur (S. W Persia). By 829 A.C., al-Mamun had a well-equipped observatory attached to his Bait-ul-Hikmah (Baghdad) where instruments of considerable accuracy were used in the study of the movements of celestial bodies.

Before the glorious Caliphate of Mamun Ibrahim al-Fazari (772 A.C.) had been the first man to construct an astrolabe (*asturlab* in Arabic); al-Mutawakkal had erected a Nilometer at Al-Fustat which was supervised by the most eminent astronomer Abu al-Abbas Ahmad al-Farghani whose principal work, "Al-Mudkhil ila 'Ilm Hay'at Al-Aflak, was to be translated into Latin in 1135.

By the end of the Tenth Century Baghdad was thronged with astronomers, including Ali Ibn Amajur and Abul Hasan Ali, still known for their accurate interpretation of lunar movements.

The Buwayhid Sultan, Sharaf-al-Dowlah, erected another observatory in Baghdad which was operated by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi, whose al-Kawakib al-Thabitah (fixed stars) is a masterpiece of observational astronomy. Abul Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad Al-Biruni is considered the most original and profound scholar, that Islam produced in the domain of natural science. He produced many treatises on astronomy which are well-known. Of the Saljuq Sultans, Jalal-al-Din Malik Shah

are very popular and were translated into Latin in the 12th century.

(4) *Al-Battani (in Latin Albategnius)*: His full name is Abu Abd Allah Muhammad Ibn Jabir Ibn Sinan al-Battani al-Harrani al-Sabi. He was born in [illegible] C.E. and died in 929 C.E. He proved the possibility of a lunar eclipse of the sun. His main work is an astronomical treatise with tables, called in Latin *De Scientia Stellarum, De numeris Stellarum et motibus*. The third chapter of his book deals with trigonometry.

(5) *Thabit*: His full name is Thabit Ibn Qurra Ibn Marwan al-Harrani. He and his sons and grandsons made great contributions in astronomy and geometry.

(6) *Al-Sufi or Azophi*: He flourished during the time of Buwayhid Sultan Sharaf al-Dawlah. His great work *Suwar-al-Kawakib al-Thabit* is a masterpiece of stellar astronomy.

(7) *Al-Hasan al-Haytham (Alhazen)*: His full name is Abu Ali Ibn al-Hasan al-Haytham—born in Basrah in 98[illegible] A.C. died in 1039 A.C. He was one of the foremost investigators of optics in the world. His masterpiece is the *Ilm-Manazir-al-Maraya* which was a source of inspiration to the English Scientists Roger Bacon, Keller and others.

(8) *Al-Zarqali (Arzachel)*: His full name is Abu Ishaq Ibrahim Abu Yahya Ali Zarqali. He carried out a series of astronomical observations. He was the first to prove conclusively the motion of Aphelion with respect to the stars. Copernicus quoted him in his famous book *De Revolutionibus*.

(9) *Jabir Ibn Aflah* (*Geber*): He died in 1145 C. E. His famous book, *Islah-al-Majisti* was translated into Latin and was in demand by the astronomers of Europe in the 16th century. He was the first to design a portable celestial sphere to explain and measure the movements of the celestial objects. He also solved some important problems in spherical trigonometry.

(10) *Nasir-al-Din* (*Nasiruddin*) He was a Minister of Halaku Khan and Ilkhan of Persia (1201 C. E. to 1274 C. E.). The observatory set up at Maraghah was operated by him. He was a great geometrician. He prepared the famous *Il Khan* tables, also a catalogue of fixed stars which was long in use in Europe to China.

(11) *Al-Bitruji* (*Alpetragius*): His book *Kitab al-Hayah* was very popular in Europe.

(12) *Abu-al-Fida*. His full name is Ismail Ibn-al-Fida (1273 to 1331 C. E.). He was a direct descendant of Sultan Salahuddin's brother and was Governor of Hamah under Sultan al-Nasir. (He also wrote a remarkable encyclopaedia on Geography). His most famous book is *Mukhtasar Tarikh Al-Bashar.*

(13) Ulug Beg (1393 to 1449 C. E.) He was a grandson of Timur Lame. He constructed an excellent observatory at Samarkand and equipped it with astronomical instruments of the best make and precision. He prepared tables of planetary motions which were popular and were in great demand.

Mr. Hitti in his "History of the Arabs" remarks, "Arab astronomers have left on the sky immortal traces of their industry which everyone who reads the names

of the stars on an ordinary celestial sphere can readily discern. Not only are most of the star-names in European languages of Arabic origin, such as Acrab (*'aqrab*, scorpion), Algedi (*al jadi*, the kid), *Altair* (*al ta'ir*, the flyer), Deneb (*dhanab*, tail) Pherkad (*farqad*, calf) but a number of technical terms, including "*azimuth*" (*al-sumut*), 'nadir (*nazir*), zenith, (*al-samt*), are likewise of Arabic etymology and testify to the rich legacy of Islam to Christian Europe" *

John William Draper summarises the Arab contribution to Astronomy in one sentence, "He, (the Arab), has left unfading traces of his Finger on the sky which everyone can see who reads the names of stars on an ordinary celestial globe"

The French scientist Sedillot shows how truly scientific was the spirit of those early astronomers. He says, "Proceeding from the known to the unknown, taking precise account of celestial phenomena, accepting nothing as true which is not confirmed by experience or established by experiment,—such were the fundamental principles taught and acclaimed by the Muslim masters of the science."

This observation is entirely in the same spirit as the saying in the Holy Quran: "Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth (in) the difference of night and day *are signs for men of understanding*".

Chemistry

One of the greatest Muslim chemists was Jabir Ibn Hayyan, latinised as Geber. Western tradition ascribes to him the discovery of several chemical compounds and his five famous treatises were translated into Latin and used

*Hitti. History of the Arabs. P. 572-73.

in Western Universities from the 14th to the 18th centuries In his works Geber described calcination and reduction and also discussed improved methods of evaporation, crystallisation and sublimation. His modification of the Aristotlian theory of the constituents of metal continued to be used until the 18th century. Other famous Muslim Chemists were Khalid Ibn Yazid and Imam Jafar al-Sadiq who contributed to the discovery of new substances such as alcohol, potassium nitrate and nitric and sulphuric acids.

"The science of Chemistry owes its origin and improvement to the industry of the Saracens", says the great historian, Gibbon, in Vol. 5 of his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire". "It was they who first invented and named the alembic for the purpose of distillation, analysed the substance of the three kingdoms of Nature, tried the distinction and affinities of alkalis and acids and converted the poisonous minerals into soft and salutary medicines".

Geography

Muslim scientists made great contributions to the science of Geography Popular interest in this subject was fostered, in part, by the religious duty of the pilgrimage which enjoined on many Muslims a long, compulsory journey, possibly hundreds of miles from their own homes.

"After the advent of Islam", says Philip Hitti in his 'History of the Arabs', "The institution of the Holy Pilgrimage, the orientation of the mosques towards Makkah and the need for determining the true direction of the Ka'bah at the time of prayer *gave religious impetus to the Muslim study of geography*".*

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Here then is yet another field in which scientific progress, far from being hindered by the Quran, received definite encouragement.

Another reason why geography became of special interest to Muslims was the tremendous impetus given to trade by the expansion of the Muslim Empire. As early as the Seventh Century Muslim traders are known to have reached India and China in the East, going both by sea and by land; going South they reached Zanzibar and the Southermost tip of the African continent: to the West they knew the Canary Islands and Teneriffe: to the North they penetrated Russia, the countries of the Baltic and even far-away Iceland. Arabic coins bearing dates from the Seventh to the Eleventh Centuries have been found as far North as Pechora (in the North-East of Soviet Russia) and in September 1950 a particularly large hoard was discovered at Trondheim, the ancient capital of Norway. Muslim influence even reached the British Isles where a gold coin struck by King Offa of Mercia in the Eighth Century closely resembles an Arab *dinar*, even to the Arabic inscription While a gilt-bronze cross found in an Irish bog, though not, of course, currency, betrays a similar influence in the Arabic inscription, bismullah."

The first Arabic description of China and India was written in 851 A.C. by the merchant, Sulaiman al-Tazi. Among other interesting details he mentions the use of finger-prints as signatures by the Chinese. The European traveller, Marco Polo, mentions Muslim commercial settlers in China The earliest account of Russia is given by Ahmad Ibn Fadlan Hamid who was sent to the King

of Bulgaria by Khalifa al-Muqtadir in 921 A.C. While al-Beruni mentions in 1038 A.C. that India was a peninsular.

Mr. J. H. Kramer writes, "Europeans ought to look upon the Muslims as their cultural ancestors in the domain of geographical knowledge, discovery and world trade, exploration and travelling."

It is interesting, also, to note that, a thousand years before De Lesseps, Khalifa Harun-al-Rashid wanted to dig a canal through the Isthmus of Suez.

The discoveries made by travellers were, however, only part of the contribution that Muslims have made to geographical knowledge. Even more far-reaching in importance was the help given by Muslim mathematicians and astronomers in such matters as the calculation of latitude and longitude and whether or not the world was round.

As early as the Ninth Century, during the glorious Caliphate of Mamun, (813 833), Muslim scientists established the fact that the world was round. Mamun had a committee set up consisting of seventy scientists who under the great Ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi produced, (in 830), the first map of the globe.

Beyond doubt it was to Muslim scientists that the West owes most of the data that led to the voyage of Christopher Columbus, for Muslim influences were particularly strong in Spain and Portugal where Columbus spent many years studying navigation. It may well be that the Mariner's Compass which Columbus used had also, originally, been an Arab invention.

Navigation

Many Europeans attribute *the invention of the Mariner's Compass* to the Chinese, but the famous orientalists George Sarton, Philip Hitti and Sir R. F. Burton all believe it to have been an Arab invention. They feel also, that the names of the great Arab Mariners of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries deserve to rank with that of Columbus. C. E. Suleiman al-Mahri and Shahabuddin ibn Majid traversed the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and circumnavigated the African continent. While Suleiman knew the Bering Straits. Both of them wrote a number of books but the most important work on navigation is undoubtedly that of Ibn Majid who wrote the first nautical guide.

Cartography

In the field of cartography the Muslims were influenced by the Greek Map-maker, Ptolemy, but as they did not follow him slavishly they soon found their knowledge more advanced than his. The celestial globes which they constructed, their maps and their mathematical work on projections became well-known in all the educational institutions of Europe.

Perhaps the most convenient way to sum up the work done by Muslim geographers is to list a few of the more illustrious names. The contribution of al-Khwarizmi to both astronomy and cartography has already been discussed. Next to him in greatness must come *Yakut* (Ibn Abdullah Al-Hamawi) who lived from 1179 – 1299 and whose *Mu'jam al-Buldan* gives encylopaedic information that embodies the whole geographical knowledge of his age. *Yakut* also wrote a Lexicon of Towns, listing and describing each town in alphabetical order.

Another geographer of great eminence was *Abu Abdallah Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Maqaddasi* who was called by Sprenger "The greatest geographer of all ages". His famous book, "Ahsan-al Taqasim fi-Ma'arifat-al-Aqalim," is attractively and profusely illustrated with maps showing golden sands, green seas, blue rivers and brown mountains the great trade routes are shown in red.

To *Abu Zaid Ahmad Ibn Sahl Al-Balkhi* must go the credit for one of the earliest and best of the Muslim Atlases. It contained maps of Arabia, the Indian Ocean, Morocco, Algeria, Syria, Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea and might be regarded as an official map of Islam since 934 A.C.

Another name worthy of mention is that of *Abu Kasem Ubaidullah Ibn Khurdadbeh* who was appointed Sahib-ul-Barid in 844. He also did much useful work on Trade Routes. The great al-Beruni (972 A.C.) has already been mentioned in connection with the Indian Peninsula. In his "Kitab-ul-Tafhim" al-Beruni showed himself familiar with the position of the great oceans. He also constructed a remarkable round map of the world.

Best known to Europeans is the Muslim geographer and cartographer *Abu Abdullah al-Idrisi*. Idrisi studied and taught at Cordova from 1130–54 and published a famous book, "Nuzhat al-Mushtaq-fi-Ikhtiraq al-Afaq", (the recreation of him who yearns to traverse the lands) containing a great many interesting maps.

The debt that Christopher Columbus owed to geographers of this calibre has already been mentioned. Even more interesting is a theory, seriously propounded by a noted American scholar, that the Arabs had already dis-

covered America long before Columbus sailed from Spain. A news article published in the *Delhi Express* on August 11th 1952 runs as follows:

"A leading South African anthropologist says the Arabs and not Christopher discovered America. The Arabs scored a lead of nearly 500 years over Columbus according to Dr. Jeffreys, Senior Lecturer of Social Anthropology at Watersand University. Dr. Jeffrey bases his claim on a discovery, eighteen months ago, of a Negro-Hemitic skull in the Rio Grande river. Dr. Jeffrey thinks that by 1000 A.C. the Arabs already commanded the Mediterranean, were established in the West coast of Africa and had also settled in America. Columbus found small colonies of Negroes in Darian Isthmus, who, according to Dr. Jeffrey, were descendants of Arab slaves. He said "the discovery of Hemitic skulls in caves of Bahama Island and African root crops in the Carribean lends credence to this theory."

Whether or not the reader is prepared to go the whole way with Dr Jeffrey one thing is certain and that is—in the words of the scholarly J. H. Kramer "the Arabs may claim a share in the discovery of the New World." Equally certain is the fact that through their command of trade and commerce they knew more than any other peoples about the geography of the Old World, knowledge which they freely shared with Western Europe.

Botany and Natural History

In the field of Natural History, as well as in that of the Natural Sciences, the Muslims enriched the world by their researches. In Botany they noted the sexual

differences between varieties of such plants as palm and hemp, they also classified plants into those that grow from seed and those that grow "spontaneously"; on their travels and pilgrimages they discovered many new varieties and species of plant.

Many of the discoveries of the botanists were put to good use in medicine. The great botanists Abdullah Ibn-Ahmad Ibn al-Baytar, who had travelled extensively in both Africa and Asia, collected his knowledge in his book *al-Jami fi al-Adwiyah al Mufradah* which is at once a great work of botany and a comprehensive list of those herbs most useful in medicine. Altogether uses are given for one thousand four hundred drugs.

Robert Briffault writes "The pharmacopoeia created by the Arab is virtually that which but for the recent synthetic and organotherapic preparations is in use at the present, our common drugs such as Nux Vomica, Senna Rhubarb, Aconite, Gentian, Myrrh calomel and the structure of our prescriptions, belong to the Arabs"

In the field of Natural History a quotation from the Qur'an may serve to shew why the early Muslims were moved to ponder over the mysteries of this world.

"And verily in cattle (too) will ye find an instructive Sign. From what is within their bodies, between excretion and blood, We produce, for your drink, milk, pure and agreeable to those who drink it." "And from the fruit of the date-palm and the vine you get out wholesome drink and food: behold, in this also is a Sign for those who are wise." "And Thy Lord taught the bee to build its cells in hills, on trees, and in (men's) habitations; then eat

of all fruits and follow the ways of thy Lord, made smooth (for thee). There cometh forth from their bellies a drink of diverse hues, wherein is healing for mankind. Lo! herein is indeed a portent for people who reflect *

Medicine

It has already been shown, in preceding excerpts, that both the chemists and the botanists contributed to the science of healing. Philip Hitti writes, in his "History of the Arabs", "In the creative use of drugs some remarkable advances were made by the Arabs. It was they who established the first apothecary shop, founded the earliest school of pharmacy and produced the first Pharmacopoeia".

Several pharmaceutical treatises were composed by Muslim scientists beginning with one by Jabir Ibn Hayyan in 778 A.C. Jabir Ibn Hayyan is often called the father of Arab Alchemy.

By the time of the Mamun Caliphate, and under al-Ma'tasim as well, a system of qualifying examinations had been instituted. These examinations, together with legal enquiries into cases where malpractice was suspected, quickly rid Baghdad of quacks. More than eight hundred physicians passed the examinations, indeed the historian, Gibbon says, "In the city of Baghdad eight hundred and sixty physicians were licensed to exercise their lucrative profession"

Hospitals

Nor was there any lack of hospitals in Baghdad at this time. According to Allama Maqrizi a hospital was set up in Cairo during the Khilafat of Al-Mutawakkil; during the

*Al-Quran: XVI, 66-69.

Ayyubide period many more hospitals were established in Egypt. Ibn Tulun, Governor of Cairo in 872 A.C. endowed a hospital with an income of three lakhs of rupees and here patients received free board and lodging as well as treatment in separate wards for separate diseases. There was also an Out-patients Department and special wards for surgical cases. This hospital also had a separate department for the treatment of the insane.

Other lunatic asylums were established in Baghdad and throughout the Muslim world. The historian Neuberger says, "The lunatics were humanely and more efficiently treated in the Mental Hospitals of Islam than in Western countries where, centuries later, they were still to be considered as criminals........" "Indeed the first European mental hospital, established by the Religious Order of Valencia in Spain in 1410, was modelled on a famous Muslim hospital built a century previously in Cairo."

A description by al-Makrizi of the Cairo hospital in 1283 even mentions the employment of musicians as a means of speeding the recovery of convalescent patients.

When Allama Ibn Jubayer travelled to Makkah in 1183-85 and again in 1189-91 he saw a network of fine hospitals in Baghdad, Mosul, Aleppo and Damascus. At Damascus Nuruddin established a very fine Dispensary and Sultan Salahuddin converted a big Fatimid palace into a big hospital which not only had a separate ward for female patients, but also a staff of female doctors as well. Inspired by the example of their predecessors other rulers also gave liberal endowments.

The biggest hospital was the Azad-al-Dowlah at Baghdad and description of it stands up well to comparison with many modern hospitals to-day. Not only did it have spacious buildings and the most up-to-date instruments but it had also as distinguished a staff as has ever been found at any medical centre. Indeed it was more than a hospital, it was also a medical university, where great men like Abu Nasr Ibn al-Dukali, the ophthalmologist; the surgeon Abul Khair; the orthopoedician Abu Solet, treated patients and lectured to students. Ibn Baleh, Abu Yaqoob and Abu Isa were also among the eighty or more experts working there.

"All other Muslim hospitals," says a European writer, "were overshadowed by the hospital that was founded in Baghdad, complete with equipment, numerous trust funds and a pharmacy stocked with drugs brought from the ends of the world.

A list of the drugs and diets used in this hospital is preserved in the British Museum in London.

The list of hospitals seems endless. In Baghdad alone the Jewish traveller, Benjamin of Toledo, noticed some sixty hospitals where, he was amazed to discover, all the patients were fed and treated at government expense. At Shiraji, Azad-al-Dowlah founded a hospital which was attached to a medical university: Abu Sayyed Kukuburi founded, in Arbela, four asylums for the blind and also some institutions for persons suffering from chronic diseases: one of the best hospitals in the whole of Islam was built in Morocco in 1200 A.C. by Abdul Wahid-al-Marrakeshi. Here poor patients were not only treated

free but, on discharge, they were also given sufficient money to maintain them until they were able to find work again. As late as the Sixteenth Century Muslim hospitals were still being endowed, a fine one having been established in Delhi.

Nowhere is the virtue of Charity, enjoined on Muslims as a sacred duty, more evident than in the establishment and maintenance of these great hospitals. There, compassion and the quest for scientific knowledge joined forces as never before.

As for the Physicians themselves, their names shine amongst the most illustrious in history. Even to-day, on the walls of the University of Paris, pride of place is given to the portraits of two Muslim physicians al-Razi, latinised as "Rhazes" and Ibn Sina, latinised as Avicenna.

Rhazes (865—925 A.C.) was the author of one hundred and thirteen major and twenty-eight minor works on medicine, all of which were translated into Latin for use in the medical schools of Western Europe, Latin in those days being the universal language of scientific study. Rhazes was a profoundly original thinker and the first doctor to write a book on pediatrics, or the special ailments of children. He believed in the curative value of sunlight and in fresh air, he proved that spring water was polluted by dead animals, in gynaecology he advocated the use of the speculum for the examination of patients; he even practised psychotherapy. Max Neuburger, an eminent writer on medical history writes about Rhazes in these words, "Rhazes was a man of rare attainments, a tireless writer of immense productiveness

and versatility and an inspired teacher; but his, also was a more precious gift than erudition, the power to read in the book of nature itself, the clinical insight which ever sees something fresh at the bedside and assures to each case the comprehension and treatment according to its individuality."

According to Dr. Karl Sudhoff, Rhazes was the greatest physician of all time, while Freind says, "He discovered the cause of smallpox in blood ferment and suspected the germ-origin of many diseases several centuries before Albert Buck".

Avicenna, who was born in Bokhara (Circa 980 A.C.,) was known as the Prince of Philosophers for, as his many encyclopaedia show, he excelled in all branches of learning. It was, however, in the field of medicine that he exerted the most overwhelming influence on Western thought, writing many treatises, and one gigantic medical encyclopaedia, all of which were translated into Latin and used as text-books in the universities of Western Europe. Latin in those days was used throughout the West as the language for medical studies.

The encyclopaedia was called, "Al-Qanun Fil Tib", latinised as "Canon" and it was a truly monumental work. Of it Philip Hitti writes, "This Canon with its encyclopaedist contents, its systematic arrangements and philosophic plan, soon worked its way in the position of prominence in the medical literature of the age, displacing the works of Galen, al-Razi and al-Majusi, becoming the text for medical education in the schools of Europe. From 12th to 17th century this work served as the chief guide to the medical science in the

West and it is still in occasional use in the Middle East". In the words of Dr. Osler, it has remained "a Medical Bible" for a longer period than any other work. The popularity of this great work may be gauged by the fact that, during the first 30 years of the 15th century alone, it was published sixteen times and in the 16th century twenty times. Some idea of its popularity may be gauged from the fact that during the fifteenth century it was re-published sixteen times in the space of thirty years while in the sixteenth century it was re-printed even more often. When one considers that the Canon was first translated into Latin, by Gerard of Cremona, in the 12th century, one can see why Dr. Osler, a doctor from Scandinavia, says that it remained as "a Medical Bible" for longer than any other piece of medical literature. Indeed Avicenna dominated Western medicine for five hundred years and his findings are by no means discredited to-day.

His chief theory concerned the "humours" of the body and he also advocated the clinical approach; it was he who first discovered the contagious nature of tuberculosis and he was the first man to write a specialised work on pediatrics and the ailments of children. He believed in the value of fresh air and the curative nature of sunlight and he warned against the dangers of drinking water from wells polluted by dead animals.

Another great Muslim physician was *Ibn al-Nafis* (died in 1288) who specialised in Physiology and who gave a correct description of the Circulation of the Blood centuries before Harvey put forward the same theory

Another Arab physician was *Ali Ibn al-Abbas* (died 994 A.C.). He was known in the West as Haly Abbas. His greatest work was the *Kitab ul-Maliki* (Liber Regius). It was divided into two parts, theoretical and practical, each part consisting of ten books. Together, the two parts covered the whole field of medicine. Al-Abbas was the first dietician and his book shows that he evolved very careful diets according to season, climate, different ages, habits of life and illnesses.

Nor should the names of many others be passed over, notably Ibn Sulaiman, Ibn Hibuttah, Ibn Gazula; Ibn Abi-al-'Ala surnamed Ibn Zuhr (Avenzoor of the West), Ibn Rushd (Averroes of the West), Ibn Abbas-al-Zahrawi (Abulcasis of the West) and Ibn Khatib.

Of the above names two belong to men eminent in the world of Surgery. *Abulcasis* was the greatest surgeon of the Muslim world his claim to distinction resting on his book—'*al-Tasrif li-Man 'Ajaz 'an al-Ta'alif*' which sums up all the surgical knowledge of his time. This manual, which deals with such reputable practices as cauterisation and the crushing of a stone in the bladder and advocates dissection and vivisection, was translated into Latin and held its place for centuries, the last date of publication was 1778, at Oxford. It also contained illustrations of surgical instruments and, in fact laid the foundations of surgery in Europe.

Avenzoor was another surgeon whose work had a profound influence on the medical schools of Europe. In the field of Ophthalmology there are also some great Muslim names. Khalifa Ibn Abi Mahasin, who flourished in 1256, wrote a famous treatise on ophthalmology,

as did also his contemporary Salah-ud-Din Ibn Yusuf. According to the French historian Leclerc, the Muslims were acquainted with over one hundred diseases of the eye and the first treatise on eye disease, called "Attraction of the Eye" was written by Yuhannabi Musawaif (777- 857 A.C.). In his "Muslim World" Y. C. Young says "the greatest scientific advances of the Muslims were made in the field of optics and ophthalmology".

Arab medicine was transmitted to Europe mainly through Spain and it is interesting to reflect that, in the 14th century, when Europe was being ravaged by the Black Death, it was the Muslim physician at Granada who diagnosed the infectious and contagious nature of the disease saying, "the existence of contagion is established by experience, investigation and the evidences of the senses and trustworthy reports. The fact of infection becomes clear to the investigater who notices how he who established contact with the infected gets the disease, whereas he who is not in contact remains safe, and how transmission is effected through garments, vessels and ear" Christian physicians at this time regarded the Black Death as an Act of God before which they stood helpless.

This contrast between Muslim knowledge and Western ignorance is brought out even more clearly by Victor Robinson in *The Story of Medicine*. On page 164 he remarks, "Europe was darkened at Sunset, Cordova shone with public lamps, Europe was dirty, Cordova built a thousand baths, Europe was covered vermin, Cordova changed its under-garments daily, Europe lay in mud, Cordova's streets

were paved and Europe's nobility could not sign its name, Cordova's children went to School, Europe's monks could not read the baptismal services, Cordova's teachers created a Library of Alexandrian dimension."

More than this, the lovely city was the stronghold of learning. Lane Poole, in his famous book, *The Moors in Spain* grows almost lyrical when he describes the university there.

"Beautiful as were the places and gardens of Cordova, her claim to admiration was not less strong. The mind was as lovely as the body, her professors and teachers made her the centre of European culture; students would come from all parts of Europe to study under her famous doctors. Every branch of science was seriously studied there and medicine received more and greater additions by the discoveries of the Muslim doctors and surgeons in Andalusia than it had gained during all the centuries that had elapsed since the days of Galen.

At this period Cordova had fifty hospitals and some nine hundred public baths. Indeed the Muslim contribution to public hygiene was considerable and this, too, affords us an example of the way in which the Holy Quran, far from debarring progress, has actually contributed to the advance of science. The Holy Quran embodies a code of hygiene rules which are entirely acceptable to physicians to-day. No less sound were the injunctions relating to food and drink and it is interesting to learn that it was the Muslims who took the first precautions against food adulteration. Special instructions were given to the police for the detection of malpractices in the sale of food, a

function which is nowadays a routine part of the duties of Public Health Officers in the West.

Muslims were ahead of their Christian contemporaries in the establishment of a regular Medical Corps to go along with their armies. This Medical Corps, like the Red Cross organisation of to-day, was expected to give help to the enemy wounded as well as to those of their own side; this was to be done in obedience to the Quranic injunction, "And co-operate regarding charity and piety". Instances of regular ambulance services during the time of the Prophet are numerous and history records details of army nurses, field hospitals and special transport for the wounded throughout the early campaigns.

In every branch of medical science the Muslims showed themselves to be both practical and original. True, the Greeks had made a beginning in medicine and much of the work of Rhazes and Avicenna owes a debt to the Greek Physician, Galen. It would have been foolish of them to reject what they knew to be true: instead they assimilated and improved upon what Galen had to offer them. This does not mean, however, that the Arabs were unoriginal or that they worked only on lines already sketched in by the Greeks. In many branches of science they were, as the foregoing excerpts have shown, first in the field, including many branches of medicine.

As the French scholar, Alfred Guillaume says, "We may be sure that those who accuse the Muslim scholars of lack of originality and intellectual decadence have never read Averroes or looked into Algazel but have adopted second hand judgement. The presence of doc-

divine manifestation and Islam believes that the workings of Physical Nature demonstrate enough rationality, method and adaptation for goodness to give man a knowledge of Allah. The Quran says also: "In your souls there are signs, why don't you see?"

The Holy Prophet and Science

The study of science has never been incompatible with Islam. Indeed the Holy Prophet said, "The study of science has the value of fast; the teaching of science has the value of prayer." He has also said, "Teach science, he who teaches it fears Allah; he who seeks it adores Allah, he who spreads it distributes alms, he who possesses it becomes an object of veneration and of benevolence. Science saves from error and sin, it clears the way to Paradise. It is our companion in travel and confidence in the desert. It guides us in the pleasures and pains of life and serves as an ornament before our friends."

Science was not brought into being by the West

The poet Iqbal has summed up the Muslim contribution to science in the following lines:

Science was not brought into being by the West,
In essence it is nothing but the delight that lies in creation,
If you ponder well, it is the Muslim who gave it life,
It is a pearl we dropped from our hands;
When the Arabs spread over the Europe,
They laid the foundation of learning and science,
The seed was sown by these dwellers of the desert;
But the harvest was reaped by the West,
This spirit is from the flask of our ancestors,
Bring the fairy back because
She hails from our own Caucasus.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ISLAM TO TECHNOLOGY, THE INDUSTRIAL ARTS AND AGRICULTURE

IN the previous section we have seen how, with the spread of Islam, many Western countries profited from the pre-eminence of the Muslims in all fields of scientific learning. The West was also to profit from the application of this knowledge to the industrial arts and technology. Muslim skills in such trades as paper-making, weaving and metal-working were freely shared with the inhabitants of the countries occupied under Islam and the immense impetus given to European trade by Muslim prosperity led to an increased standard of living in many parts of the Western world.

Paper-making

Paper-making was one of the earliest of the Muslim skills. As early as the middle of the Eighth Century, writing paper of high quality was being manufactured in Samarkand. Baghdad is known to have had its first paper mill by 794. After that date paper replaced parch ment in all Government offices thereover. Other Muslim towns also set up mills where various kinds of paper, both white and coloured, were produced. A mill to manufacture paper from vegetables was set up in Jehama and mills for the finest quality writing papers in Syria. Tripoli was also famous for fine papers and Egypt is known to have had its first mills in 900 A.C. By the beginning of the Tenth Century paper had replaced parchment, not only in Baghdad, but throughout Islam.

The earliest Arabic manuscript written on paper, that has been discovered is a dissertation on the Traditions known as the *Gharib al-Hadith* by Abu Ubayed; it is thought to date from 837 A.C. and it can be seen in Holland, preserved in the Library of the University of Leyden.

The paper-making industry later spread to Morocco and thence, about 1250 A.C. to Muslim Spain. It was through Spain that the methods of manufacturing paper became known to Christian Europe.

J. H. Kramer writes, "The paper industry was introduced into Europe through Muslim sources in the 13th Century. The linen paper industry was for long a monopoly of Xativa near Valencia in Muslim Spain and from there it was introduced into Catalonia and to Provence in France."

It is interesting to reflect that the paper that was to be manufactured in ever-increasing quantities after the invention of printing in 1450—55 owes its origin to those first Muslim paper-makers in Samarkand. Indeed the spread of popular education in Europe and America, which owes so much to the availability of cheap paper might also be considered indebted to this Muslim discovery.

A prominent European historian commenting on the book-markets of mediaeval Cordova writes, "This accumulation of books in Andalusia would not have been possible *but for the local manufacture of writing paper, the most beneficial contribution of Islam to Europe.* Without paper printing from movable type would not [illegible] successful and without paper and printing [illegible] in Europe would not have been feasible.

A philological reminder of this historical fact is English 'ream' derived from old French 'rayme' from Spanish 'resma', a loan word from Arabic 'rizmah'."

Muslim Spain as an Industrial Centre

Spain under Islam was one of the wealthiest and most thickly populated of European countries. The capital boasted of thirteen hundred *weavers*, while wool and silk were also woven in Cordova, Malaga and Almeria. Almeria also produced *brass-ware* and *glass* while Paterna, in Valencia, was the home of *pottery*. Jaen and Algarve were noted for their gold and silver mines, Cordova for its lead and these metals contributed in turn to the chief industry of Toledo – the fashioning of superbly inlaid *swords*.

Toledo, like Damascus before it, became famous for the beauty and craftsmanship of these swords which were made of steel, inlaid with floral designs in gold and silver. This art, first practised in Damascus, is still known as **"damascene"**.

This same skill in metal work led also to a flourishing *jewellry industry* for which precious rubies were to be had from Malaga. One hears of goldsmiths making, in addition to bracelets and brooches and necklaces, marvellously intricate ornaments such as golden trees. They also made very beautiful cases for the clocks constructed by Muslim mathematicians.

The high standard of Muslim workmanship and design is likewise to be seen in the *leather industry*. Spanish craftsmen having learned from Morocco how to treat and emboss leather; and along with these other luxury trades, Spain also had a highly developed *perfumery industry*.

Pietra Dura Art (Inlay) in Islam

The art of inlay, so apparent in the work of Toledo craftsman, can also be seen in other forms. Many people think that "pietra dura" art, the art of inlaying with precious stones, is Italian in origin but in actual fact the technique was known to the Muslims some centuries before it was introduced into Florence in 1510 A.C.

The technique was used profusely under the Moghals, in India for the embellishment of mosques, tombs and palaces and beautiful examples of it are to be found in the famous Taj Mahal, in the Red Fort at Delhi, in I'temad-ud-Dowlah's tomb at Agra and embellishing many other masterpieces of Muslim architecture. In these constructions the simplest Islamic patterns and devices have been used to produce masterpieces of beauty and "pietra dura" craftsmanship which remain unrivalled amongst the art treasures of the world.

The Spread of Muslim Handicrafts in Europe

One of the greatest of Muslim handicrafts was the weaving of cloth. J. H. Kramer writes, "It was Muslim workmen who were mainly responsible for setting up textile industries in France and Italy, and at a time when Islamic prosperity made possible a development of industrial skill which brought the artistic value of the products to an unequalled height. It is curious to note, too that the robes of mediaeval German Emperor bore Arabic inscription."

Another prominent European orientalist points out that, so beautiful was some of the cloth woven by the Muslims, that the Christian Crusaders preferred to wear robes woven by their enemies and rivals.

"The industrial art of Islam attained a high degree of excellence; carpet weaving was specially developed. Decorated silk fabric, the product of Muslim handlooms in Egypt and Syria were so highly prized in Europe that they were chosen by the crusaders and other Westerners above all textiles as wrappings for relics of saints."

The cloth industry in Islam was indeed an extensive one. A striped fabric called "attabi", manufactured in Baghdad in the 12th Century was copied in Spain and, under the trade name of "tafi" became very popular in Italy, France and other parts of Europe. At Tustai and al-Susun Khujistan there were a number of factories set up for the manufacture of cloth embroidered with gold and it may well have been from these factories that the garments for the crusaders came.

So extensive was the Arab trade in cloth that factories could not, by themselves, have supplied the ever-increasing demand in the markets of the West. Handloom and home industry supplemented factory supplies and this was also true of the weaving of carpets and tapestries. Carpets of all sizes and prices were exported, one of the highest prices known being thirteen million dinars for a single carpet.

In the cloth and carpet industries the same high standards of design and craftsmanship prevailed as in other Muslim handicrafts. In the words of a prominent European orientalist, "In manufactures they (the Muslims) outdid the world in the variety and beauty of design and perfection of worksmanship. They worked on all metals—gold, silver, copper, bronze, iron

and steel. In textile fabrics they have never been surpassed. They made glass and pottery of the finest quality. They knew the secrets of dyeing and manufactured paper. They had many processes of dressing leather and their work was famous throughout Europe."

The centre of the glass industry, mentioned above, was Damascus, where for many centuries until, in fact it was sacked by Timur, exquisite glass-ware was manufactured. Typical of the work done in Damascus were the mosque lamps exported from there to all parts of Islam. These were intricately engraved with quotations from the Holy Quran and delicately inlaid with coloured enamel. It was from Damascus that the glass industry spread to Venice, the Italian craftsmen being initiated into its trade secrets by Muslims.

In addition to setting up new industries in Europe the Muslims also traded with Europe for raw materials not available in their own countries, for example amber from the coast of the Baltic Sea and furs from Russia. Professor Hell pays special attention to the way in which raw materials from the northern-most parts of Europe found their way into the markets of cities like Baghdad. To these countries, the Arabs, in turn sent back finished products of their own.

"There is little reason to doubt", says Professor Hell, "that the Arabs exported to these countries (Russia, North Europe) woven materials, jewellery, metal mirrors, glass beads, spices and harpoons for whaling. *A glance at the exports and the imports reveals the cultural superiority of the Islamic empire. It exchanged its own manufactured products for the raw materials of the North.*"

Muslim Exports and World Trade

The Arabs commanded world trade during the Middle Ages, each new triumph of Islam opening up new markets for Muslim handicrafts and industries. Muslim towns like Baghdad, Bokhara and Samarkand remained the centres for World Fairs until well into the Sixteenth Century, commanding as they did the great overland trade routes of three Continents.

Muslim supremacy at sea, discussed elsewhere in this volume,* also made it possible for Arab merchants to maintain over twenty-six thousand ships at sea, carrying merchandise to countries as far away as China and Britain and trading with India, Java, Sumatra and Ceylon as well as with Africa and Europe. From these distant lands Muslim merchants collected many objects of use and beauty which they passed on to Europe, together with commodities manufactured in the Islamic countries themselves. These included: silks, brocades, tapestries, ornaments, jewellery, rugs, carpets, sofas, tables and other articles of furniture, lamps, kitchen utensils, scissors, needles, glassware, even soap.

A large number of Arabic words still retained in the trade directories of many European languages bear eloquent witness to the fact that many of these commodities *were first introduced into these countries by the Muslims.* The much-used word "tariff" is simply Arabic for "announcement".

Of the way in which the Arabs shared the benefits they accrued, Von Kramer writes, "The great riches

*See Part one Section 5.

of material culture which the Islamic world had gathered for nearly five centuries were passed down to Europe. The riches consisted not only of Chinese, Indian and African products, which the enterprising spirit of Islam fetched from distant lands; they were in the first place represented by what the Muhammadan countries themselves yielded of natural and industrial products."

So, once again, we see the Muslims both as preservers and as originators: we see, also, how freely they allowed the West to benefit from the fruits of their genius and skill in practical as well as in intellectual matters.

The New Standard of Living as Typified by Muslim Spain

Nowhere is the Muslim contribution to the grace and comforts of life better summarised than in a description of Cordova given by Philip Hitti in his "History of the Arabs". Hitti writes, "The reigns of Abd-al Rahman III and his successor al-Hakam II (961 to 976 C.E.) together with the dictatorship of al-Hajib al-Mansur (977 to 1002 C.E.) mark the apogee of Muslim rule in the West..... In this period the Umayyad capital took its place as the most cultured city in Europe and, with Constantinople and Baghdad, as one of the three cultural centres of the world. With its one hundred and thirteen thousand homes, twenty-one suburbs, seventy libraries and numerous bookshops, mosques and palaces, it acquired international fame and inspired awe and admiration in the hearts of travellers. It enjoyed miles of paved streets illuminated by lights from the bordering houses whereas, "seven hundred years after this time there was not much as one public lamp in London", and, "in Paris, centuries

subsequently, whoever stepped over his threshold on a rainy day stepped up to his ankles in mud." When the University of Oxford still looked upon bathing as a heathen custom, generations of Cordovan scientists had been enjoying baths in luxurious establishments.... Whenever the rulers of Lyons, Navarre and Barcelona needed a surgeon, an architect, a master singer, a dressmaker, it was to Cordova that they applied. The fame of the Muslim capital penetrated distant Germany where a Saxon nun styled it, "the jewel of the world".*

The Contribution of Islam to Agriculture

Agriculture, as practised by the Muslims, must take its place amongst the Applied Sciences. In those countries that were under Islam, agriculture depended primarily on irrigation and here the findings of Muslim mathematicians and physicists were applied to practical problems like the raising and distribution of water, with great benefit to the poorer inhabitants. Muslim botanists, too, helped to improve the crops which could now be sown on land which had previously been desert, while it was part of the enlightened policy of Islam to see that the agricultural workers, irrespective of race and creed, received liberal help and protection.

Irrigation was a constant preoccupation of the governors of the new territories and thousands of wind-mills and water-mills were constructed where climate and terrain permitted. Hundreds of new canals were dug and as many old ones, dating from remote times, re-opened. Arab geographers frequently mention the Caliphs digging or

* Hitti 'History of the Arabs.' p. 526-27.

opening *rivers*, which may refer to digging a new canal or dredging an old one. As a result of this irrigation the wastes of Khurasan, for example, and of Transoxiana and Sijistan began to vie with Egypt and Iraq as the most fertile tracts in the world. Between Bokhara and Samarkand lay a veritable paradise on Earth—the Wadi-al-Sugud and the garden irrigated by the Ubullah canals extending South-east to Basrah, while the country all round Damascus was just like one great garden. In these gardens grew many varieties of fruits, vegetables and flowers, among them dates, apples, olives, apricots, peaches, plums, lemons, oranges, figs, grapes, radishes, pomegranates and roses; while at Faris and al-Ahwaz sugarcane was grown. The refining of sugar became a flourishing industry, especially after the Crusaders introduced it into Europe.

So good was the Muslim network of canals that when, shortly before the World War, the Turkish government commissioned William Willcocks to study the irrigation problem of al-'Iraq, his report emphasised the necessity of cleaning the old water-courses rather than constructing new ones.

During the Arab conquest of Spain many thousands of acres of arid land were irrigated. A code of law was evolved to ensure an equitable distribution of water amongst the farmers, sluice-gates were kept locked until inundation of the land was required, usually at special seasons, and there was even a system by which surplus water could be carried back into the original channel for use on another time.

The principle of siphoning water was known to the Muslims some three hundred years before it was re-dis-

covered in France and extensive use was made of it in their hydraulic system. A subterranean aqueduct at Maravilla, used to water the plain of Urgai, was a mile long and thirty feet in diameter, and it was still in good condition after a thousand years.

The early Muslim agriculturists also understood the importance of fertilising the land and manure was used extensively. According to Thatcher and Swill, in their *General History of Europe*, "They practised farming in a scientific way and had a good system of irrigation. They knew the value of fertilisers and adapted their crops to the quality of the ground."

Their botanists studied the best times for planting crops having become familiar with the movement of the sap and they also improved the seed by means of grafting. Eight systems of grafting were known and in all the principal towns and cities there were agricultural schools to pass on to the cultivators the knowledge that had been gained. Muslim naturalists also knew how to protect young plants from the injurious effects of the sun and to preserve fruit from attacks by harmful insects. Thatcher and Swill continue their praise of Muslim agriculturalists with the following words:

"They excelled in horticulture, knowing how to graft and how to produce new varieties of fruits and flowers. They introduced into the West many trees and plants from the East and wrote scientific treatises on farming."

One of the crops introduced into the West was the olive into Spain, where the preparation of olive oil has long been a major industry. John William Draper writes,

"Not only did they attend to the cultivation of plants and the introduction of new ones but they likewise paid attention to the breeding of cattle, sheep and horses. To them, also, we owe the introduction of the great products, rice, sugar and cotton and also, as we presently observed nearly all the garden, and orchard fruits together with less important plants, as spinach and saffron. To them Spain owes the culture of silk."

The agricultural products of Muslim Spain were more than sufficient for domestic consumption. Seville, one of the greatest ports, exported olive oil and cotton, while Malaga exported saffron, figs and sugar in large quantities.

Joseph Hell in his *Arab Civilisation* writes eloquently of Muslim agriculture in Spain.

"From the middle of May in the year 756 A.C. the Umayyads, excluded from the East, held sway in Spain as Princes of Andalusia. Their two hundred and eighty years' rule constitute the flowering time of Islamic culture in Spain. With the wonderful economic growth of the country, thanks to an excellent system of irrigation and waterworks, enriched by the introduction of the agricultural products of the East such as rice, sugarcane, date palm, peaches, pomegranates with a thriving trade with Africa and Asia, with its silk industry which engaged 1,30,000 men to work it."

The value of the Muslim influence on Spanish agriculture may also be estimated by comparing the flourishing condition of Spain before Granada fell with the misery and decay that prevailed after the Moors had left. The historian Conde writes, "And so vanished

for ever from the Spanish territory—this brave, intelligent and enlightened people, who with resolution and labour inspired life into the land which the vain pride of the Goths condemned to sterility and endowed with prosperity, with abundance and with innumerable canals; this people whose admirable courage was likewise in happiness and adversity, a strong rampart to the throne of the Caliph, whose genius, progress and study raised in cities an eternal edifice of light, which sent its rays to Europe and inspired it with passion of study and whose magnanimous spirit tainted all its acts with an unrivalled colour of grandeur and nobility and endowed it in the eyes of posterity with a sort of extraordinary greatness and charming colour of heroism."

Lane Poole, who comments in his *History of the Moors in Spain* on the way in which "the engineering skill of the Muslims" had helped the agriculture of that country goes on to paint a desolate picture of the same country after the fall of Granada as follows :

"With Granada fell Spain's greatness. For a time in Spain, the reflection of the Moorish splendours cast a hallowed light upon the history of Spain, then followed the abomination of dissolution, the rule of Inquisition and the blackness of the darkness in which Spain has been plunged ever since. In the land where science was once supreme the Spanish became cited for nothing but ignorance and insignificance. The arts of Toledo and Almeria faded into insignificance. *The land, deprived of the skilful irrigation of the Moors grew impoverished and neglected, the richest and most fertile valleys languished and were deserted*

and most of the populous cities which had filled every district in Andalusia fell into ruinous decay, and beggars, friars, bandits took the place of scholars, merchants and knights. So low fell Spain when she had driven away the Moors. Such is the melancholy contrast offered by history."

Islam and the Ownership of Land

For agriculture to thrive it is not enough to irrigate or fertilise the land, the people who work the land must also be satisfied. Here again the practical side of the religion of Islam bore fruit, the Quran encouraging agriculture and farming with words such as, "And there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time", and frequently exhorting them to work hard on the land. In the Quran we read. "The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains and Allah multiplies for whom He pleases."*

The Holy Prophet once said, "Seek your Fortunes in what the earth hides" (see also Tirmidzy) and the Imam Muslim reports from Jabir Ibn Abdullah that he also said that if a Muslim plants a plant or grows vegetables he earns a reward from Allah.

As regards the actual division of land the Holy Prophet has said. "If a person owns a piece of land he should either cultivate it himself or give it free to his brothers but if he did not do it he should not allow it to lie uncultivated." The Holy Prophet felt that an individual should possess only as much land as [illegible] and that the [illegible]

* Surah 2, Verse 261.

who, in their turn, would cultivate it to their utmost ability. On another occasion the Holy Prophet said, "No one should get more than he works for."

When new territories were conquered the original inhabitants were left in peaceful possession of their lands subject to a land tax similar to the ones they had been accustomed to pay. This was [illegible] Muslim protection.

During actual periods of conquest the Holy Prophet gave Muslim soldiers the strictest instructions not to destroy any trees or crops, nor were they allowed to kill any of the enemy peasantry who were peacefully going about their business of farming. Inspired by the Prophet's example, the first Khalifa, Abu Bakr gave the following instructions to Usama son of Zaid when he sent the first expedition to Syria in 632 C.E. and also to other generals:

"See that thou avoidest treachery, depart not in any way from the right, thou shalt mutilate none, neither shalt thou kill the child or aged man nor any woman. Injure not the date-palm, neither burn it with fire and cut not down any tree wherein is food for man or beast. Slay not the flock or herds or camels except for needful sustenance."

Those early Muslims felt that the land was the property of Allah and should be used by Muslims for the good of all. A careful study of the Quran shows that landlordism is against Islamic principles; on the other hand there is not one single verse in the Quran which is against Land Reform. In this, as in other matters, the need of the community should take precedence over all others and

there is no reason why an Islamic country to-day should not embark on an agricultural policy as reasonable and enlightened, considered in the context of the Twentieth Century, as that of Abu Bakr or Hazrat Omar in the golden days of Islam.

ISLAM AND THE LIBERAL ARTS

Islam and Philosophy

In the first two sections the reader has been shown something of the contribution made by Islam to the advancement of scientific knowledge and of the Industrial Arts. In this section his attention will be directed towards Muslim achievements in the Liberal Arts, after which he will be invited to examine the Muslim concepts of Education as a whole.

It should be remembered that in the great days of Islamic scholarship no one subject could be isolated in a water-tight compartment. Specialists there were, but the same eager curiosity about the world around him which might lead a man to become a chemist or an astronomer was equally certain to make him a philosopher as well. Such a man was Omar Khayyam, well known in the West as a poet and philosopher, but whose claim to fame rests also on his distinguished and highly original work as an astronomer and mathematician. The historian Ibn Khaldun was at once both philosopher and historiographer, indeed Hitti calls him "The greatest *historical philosopher* that Islam produced and one of the greatest of all time". Yet another Muslim scholar who did not confine himself to scientific study alone, was the physician Ibn Rushd of whom Hitti says, "Ibn Rushd the physician was entirely eclipsed by Ibn Rushd the philosopher and commentator."

[illegible]thing must be said here about the work of Ibn R[illegible], whose chief work *T[illegible] al-Tahafut* (the inco-[illegible] of the [illegible]) is regarded by many M[illegible]s [illegible] as heresy. H[illegible] does not consider Ibn R[illegible]'s [illegible] as in any way [illegible] to Muslim beliefs be-c[illegible], he feels, Islam itself is so supremely rational a religion. The [illegible], Professor M[illegible] makes the [illegible] point very [illegible] when he says, "Islam is a [illegible] that is essentially rationalistic in the widest sense of the term and considered etymologically and historically. The definition of rationalism as a system that bases religious beliefs on principles furnished by the reason, exactly applies to Islam."

This definition is perhaps equally applicable to the method used in the philosophical work of Ibn Rushd. Much that is considered heretic in Ibn Rushd was probably, [illegible] feels, never written by him at all for all too many [illegible] works by other writers have been wrongly attributed to Ibn Rushd. Hitti goes on to say, "With all its excel-[illegible]s and all the misconceptions collected under his name the intellectual movement initiated by Ibn Rushd continued to be a living factor in European thought until the birth of modern experimental science."

The pure intellectualism of Ibn Rushd known to the West as Averroes was all the more valuable when one considers how mediaeval alchemists, contemporary with him were still searching vainly for what was [illegible] "the philosopher's stone", a process which was [illegible], would turn all base metals into gold. The [illegible] of "philosophy" in this connection further de-

monstrates the all-inclusive nature of the term. In the original Greek "philosophy" meant "love of wisdom", any kind of wisdom. To-day, however, we tend to use the word to describe the kind of mental processes and pre-occupations that distinguished the work of men like Ibn Rushd and his two immediate predecessors, also living in Spain in the Twelfth Century: Ibn Bajjah and Ibn Tufail. The Twelfth Century in Spain is considered the greatest century in the history of philosophic thought under Islam, certainly the time when Muslim scholars most influenced Western ideas.

Sir Edward Thorpe in his book, *A History of Chemistry* writes "The Muslim Caliphate in Spain under the beneficent rule of Yusuf and Yakub alone saved science from extinction. Cordova, Seville, Granada and Toledo were the chief centres of learning in Western Europe, and it was mainly through the perfect and glorious [illegible] the Muslim Ibn Rushd better known as Averroes (1126 to 1198 A.C.)* that Christian scholars like Roger Bacon acquired their knowledge of the philosophical system of Aristotle and through the Muslim Geber and Avicenna that they gained acquaintance with the East."†

The French historian Ernest Renan considered Averroes, or Ibn Rushd, so important that he devoted

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* The French historian, Briffault in his book *The Making of Humanity* says of Roger Bacon, who is referred to above, "He was no less than one of the apostles of Muslim science and Muslim scientific method to Christian Europe and he never wearied of declaring that a knowledge of Arabic and of Arabic science was, for his contemporaries, the only way to true knowledge."

† P. 20.

a major book to a study of the man and his ideas. This book called *Averroes and Averroism* stresses among other things the superb tolerance that distinguished the atmosphere of Cordova when Ibn Rushd was lecturing there.

Islam and Historiography

Nearest to the "pure" philosophers in their approach to life are, perhaps, the Muslim historiographers. Three names stand out amongst Muslim historians. First there was Abu al-Hasan 'Ali al-Mas'udi, known as "the Herodotus of the Arabs". Like the great Greek historian, al-Mas'udi was also the Father of History of Arab history, but al-Mas'udi had a different approach to the facts at his disposal. He invented the "topical" method and he grouped his events not around years and dates but around persons and dynasties. He was also the first to make use of a good historical anecdote as a means of enlivening the work.

The other two great names are Ibn Khaldun and al-Tabari.

Ibn Khaldun is undoubtedly the most famous of the three, his fame resting on his *Muqaddamah* in which he presented, for the first time, a theory of historical development that took due account of physical factors, like climate and geography, as well as of the moral and spiritual forces at work. Indeed Ibn Khaldun may well be considered the real founder of sociology for he was the first man to attempt to discover the laws of national progress and decay. In the words of Philip Hitti, "No Arab writer, indeed no European, had ever taken a view of history at once so comprehensive and philosophic."

Another historian acknowledges the debt owed by Europe to Arab historians in the following words:

"They (the Arabs) merit eternal gratitude for having been the preservers of the learning of the Greeks and Hindus when those people were no longer producing anything and when Europe was still too ignorant to undertake the charge of that precious department of knowledge. To efface the Arab historians would be to retard the renaissance of letters in Europe by several centuries".

Franz Rosenthal in his *History of Muslim Historiography* remarks: "Muslim historiography has at all times been united by the closest ties with the general development of scholarship in Islam and the position of historical knowledge in Muslim education has exercised a decisive influence upon the intellectual level of historical writing. *The Muslims achieved a definite advance beyond previous historical writings in the sociological understanding of history and the systematisation of historiography.* This development of modern historical writing seems to have gained considerably in speed and substance through the utilisation of Muslim literature which enabled Western historian from the Seventeenth Century on, to see a large section of the world through foreign eyes. The Muslim historiography helped indirectly and modestly to shape present day historical thinking."

Muslim historians seem to have been prolific writers. One German orientalist has personally collected five hundred and ninety history books written in Arabic during the early days of Islam. The author of *Kashf uz-zunun* lists one thousand and three hundred such books written

had made. Muslim paper mills, as we have seen, produced the paper on which these books were written and copied but it was the great respect in which books were held by all Muslims in the early days of Islam that best reveals the extent of Arab literary achievement.

Books were copied and sold by a large number of booksellers to many thousands of public, as well as private libraries. Of the private libraries that of al-Mawsili, in the Tenth Century, is one of the most famous. Here scholars were supplied with paper free of cost. In the same period the founder of the library at Basrah granted liberal stipends to scholars working there, while Spain was to benefit greatly in the matter of private and public libraries as a result of the Muslim occupation. In the 13th Century the library at Cordova possessed between four and six lakhs of books at a time when Christian Europe, according to the Catholic Encyclopaedia had no library larger than two thousand volumes.

The Bait al-Hikmah at Cairo contained two million books, the library at Tripoli some three million including fifty thousand copies of the Holy Quran. This library was burned by Christians during the First Crusade.*

In the library of al-Hakam books were arranged in forty classified sections, each section containing eighteen thousand books. The Khazinat-al-Kutub, a library

* Christian writers have frequently accused the Arabs of destroying the great Greek library at Alexandria at the time when 'Amr ibn al-'Aas conquered Egypt. More recent scholarship has proved this accusation to be totally untrue for reasons which are to be found on page 113 of the Appendix to this volume.

founded at Shiraz in 984 A.C. by the Persian King, 'Adad-al-Dawlah consisted of three hundred and seventy rooms beautifully laid out in a magnificent park, and with a fine pavilion as well. It is obvious that in those days literature was held in high esteem.

At Merv there was a splendid library where Yaqut the Geographer spent over four years collecting material after he had fled before the Mongol hordes of Ghengiz Khan. Other renowned libraries were to be found in Baghdad, Ramhurmuz, Basrah, Rayy, Balkh, Bukhara and Ghazni, all of them gracious buildings designed to contribute to the pleasures of literary scholarship. Many dignitaries willed their books to the public among them the historian al-Khatib, a library being established in his memory. Such libraries often acted not only as depositories for books but also as lecture halls and meeting places for public debates.

The mosques also acted as libraries so that throughout Islam books were available to all who wished to read, while scholars and savants as famous as Ibn Sina, Ibn Maskawayh and Ash-Shabusti were proud to hold posts as librarians.

Private ownership of books was also common amongst the richer Muslims and the historian Gibbon tells the story of a Muslim physician who "refused the invitation of the Sultan simply because he required four hundred camels to carry his books with him."

One of the many stories about the Khalifa Harun-al-Rashid shows him as a great lover of learning and a prodigious collector of rare books After defeating the

Roman Emperor Nicephorus in a number of battles the Khalifa wrote a letter to him saying:

"I have conquered a large part of your kingdom which is now mine by right but I will gladly return those territories again if you undertake to give me copies of books on literature and science that are in your empire". The Roman Emperor willingly agreed to this request and the Khalifa restored the conquered territories and sent Muslim scholars to copy the books on literature and science from all the libraries of the Roman Empire. His son Khalifa al-Mamun, himself a great scholar carried on the work of procuring copies from the Roman Empire.

Winthrop Reade in his famous book, *Martyrdom of Man* pays tribute to Muslim book-learning in these words, "At a time when books were so rare in Europe that the man who possessed one often gave it to a Church and placed it on the altar—to obtain remission of his sins; when three or four hundred parchment scrolls were considered a magnificent endowment for the richest monastery; when scarcely a priest in Europe could translate Latin into his mother-tongue; and when even in Italy a monk who picked up a smattering of Mathematics was looked upon as a magician, here was a country—a Muslim country—in which every child was taught to read and write: in which every town had a public library, in which book collecting was a mania."

The great Geographer al-Ya'qubi said that in his time there were as many as a hundred bookshops in just one street in Baghdad.

It was in Spain, however, particularly in Cordova, that Muslim literary achievement reached its peak. Lane Poole, writing in his *History of the Moors in Spain*, speaks of it as a time when poetry was on the lips of all.

"Never was there a time in Europe before when poetry became so much the speech of everybody, when people of all rank, composed those Arabic verses which suggested models for the ballad and canzonet of the Spanish minstrel and the troubadours of Provence and Italy. No speech was complete without some scrap of verse improvised on the spur of the moment by the speaker or quoted from memory from some famous poet".

Philip Hitti in his *History of the Arabs* also acknowledges the debt owed by Europe to Spanish poets; he notes the influence, too, of Moorish literature on prose works:

"The rich fantasy of Spanish literature betrays an Arabic origin as does the wit of Cervantes who jokingly claimed that Don Quixote had an Arabic original."

Hitti cites a number of Spanish Muslims who were distinguished authors, beginning with Ibn 'Abd Rabbih (860—940 A.C.) the laureate of 'Abd al-Rahman III "His title to fame", says Hitti "rests on the miscellaneous anthology he composed, *Al-'Iqd al-Farid*." But the greatest scholar and the most original thinker of Spanish Islam was 'Ali Ibn Hazm (994 to 1064 C.E.), one of the two or three most fertile minds and most prolific writers of Islam . . . Ibn Khallikan and Al-Qifti ascribe to him four hundred volumes on history, theology, tradition, logic, poetry and allied subjects. . . . The most valuable of his surviving works is *Al-Fasl fi Al-Milal wa al-Ahwa' wa al-Nihal* which entitles

him to the honour of being the first scholar in the field of comparative religion".

Another great Western scholar, Joseph Hell, writes in his *Arab Civilisation* of the place of poetry in Spain. "Poetry", he says, "became the ruling passion of the Andalusians. A study of the lives and activities of the learned men of the eleventh century reveals an astonishing vision of the intellectual fertility of immediately preceding century. *Erroneous then is the complacent assumption of the West that only on European soil did Islam really bear intellectual flower and fruit, on Asiatic soil Islam reached its culminating point in the arts as in science*".

Those great days of scholarship were also the great days of chivalry and at the Courts of the Caliphs the young noblemen were required to please the ladies as much by a display of intellect as of horsemanship and to be able to wield rhythm and rhyme in the cause of poetry as ably as they might wield their Toledo swords. Nor were the ladies themselves without poetic ability. Al-Maqqari devotes a whole chapter to the literary women of Spain, while Hitti calls Walladah, the beautiful daughter of Caliph Mustakfi, who was also a famous poetess, "the Sappho of Spain".

Another great European work which Hitti says was strongly influenced by the ballad poetry of Muslim Spain is the French epic poem, *Le Chanson de Roland*, a poem which appeared about 1080 A.C. and which, Hitti feels, marked the beginning of a new civilisation in Europe—a civilisation indebted to Islam not only for much of its poetry but also in many other ways, as this anthology shows.

Islam and Oratory

The art of oratory has always flourished in Islam. From the very earliest days the Mosque was the centre of all important pronouncements, both spiritual and temporal, and throughout the centuries Muslim preachers, teachers and students studied the ways in which their listeners might be most profitably exhorted, instructed and inspired. What began as a technique of sermonising developed into a literary art and this knowledge of oratory played a great part in the development of literary forms in the days when literature was communicated by word of mouth far more often than it was written down in manuscript.

Philip Hitti writes, "Public speaking in its several forms was cultivated during the Umayyad epoch as never before and attained a height unsurpassed in later times. The *Khatib* used it as an instrument of religion in his Friday noon sermons, the general resorted to it as a means of arousing military enthusiasm among his troops and the provincial governor depended upon it for instilling patriotic feeling in his subjects. In an age with no special facilities for propaganda, oratory provided an excellent channel for spreading ideas and kindling emotions. The highly ethical orations of 'Ali, with their rhymes and wise sayings, the sermonettes of the ascetic al-Hasan al-Basri (d. 728) delivered in the presence of the Caliph 'Umar ibn-'Abd-al-'Aziz and preserved by the latter's biographers, the military and patriotic speeches of Ziyad ibn Abih and the fiery al-Hajjaj—all these are among the most valuable literary treasures handed down to us from that early age."*

Islam and Painting

Art under Islam is a controversial subject but one thing is certain, Muslim artists made considerable contributions

* History of the Arabs, page 249.

to the development of painting, including portraiture.

The earliest and most popular kind of art was mural. In the Syrian desert were to be found bath-houses and pleasure-houses, such as those built by Walid (705–715 A.C.) the Qasr-i-'Amrah and the Mashatta by Yazid II (720–724 A.C.) the walls of which were adorned by some very fine pictorial representations. Symbolic figures were always a favourite subject, representing such abstractions as victory, poetry or philosophy; and there were also portraits of royal personages. Similar murals were to be found in Iran and in Egypt, also commissioned under the Ummayad Caliphs.

In the Thirteenth Century books, especially story-books and books about science were profusely illustrated. One of the most successful illustrators of this period was the artist Yaha Ibn Ali whose pictures for Hariri's *Muqamat* must have given much pleasure. Book illustration also flourished in mediaeval India, classics such as *Amir Hamza*, the *Shah-namah Khamush* of Nizami, the *Akbar-namah* and *Dara-namah*, all being published with pictures.

It was, of course, under the Moghals too, that Muslim painters produced some of the best art that the world has seen. Father Sebastian Monrique, a Roman Catholic priest who visited Shah Jehan's court at Delhi in 1641, thought that portrait painting and the depicting of scenes of royal splendour "attained the highest standards ever reached". Sayyad Ali was one of the great artists of this time.

Father Monrique also recorded the fact that the royal library at Agra contained twenty-four thousand manuscripts many of which were illustrated and illuminated.

Illumination is perhaps a minor art but under the Muslims it achieved an exquisite form. The manuscripts most frequently illuminated were those of the "Word of Allah", infinite pains being taken by the artists to make the decoration as worthy of the text as was humanly possible. So careful were these decorators that even the most beautifully produced Qurans those belonging to the Mameluk Caliphs seldom have more than three pages fully illuminated. These manuscripts, carefully preserved today in the library at Agra must rank amongst the greatest treasures of Muslim art.

Islam and Architecture

The influence of Muslim architecture on the West was distinctive and considerable, the greatest example of religious architecture still extant being the Mosque at Cordova with its "forest" of twelve hundred and ninety-three columns and its square, Syrian-type minarets. The system of vaulting here, based on intersecting arches and visible intersecting ribs was a truly original Arab contribution.

Of secular buildings, the Alcazar of Seville, still remains as a monument to the beauty and decorative powers of Arab architecture, while interior decoration in the profuse Muslim manner is typified by the Alhambra Palace in Granada.

With the Crusades there came a considerable intermingling of Muslim and Christian architectural styles resulting in a form of building now considered as typically Spanish but the fact that the Spanish language preserves many Arabic terms clearly shows the Arabic origin of many

of the structures. The term "Moorish" arch is still used to-day for any horseshoe arch, so characteristic did it become of Muslim architecture in the West.

In Egypt some of the finest work was done by those Muslim architects who had fled, in the Thirteenth Century, from the Mongol invasion of Baghdad and Damascus. Of this period Hitti says, "Domes were constructed that defy rivalry for lightness, beauty of outline and richness of decoration........ The period was also noteworthy for the development of the stalactite pendentive as well as for two other familiar features of Muslim decoration, geometrical arabesques and Kufic lettering."

Throughout the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries there was a great deal of vigorous architecture in Christian and Muslim countries alike, each civilisation influencing the architecture of other. The West took a number of architectural patterns from the Islamic World such as painted and cusped arches, bar tracery in windows, plate tracery, the use of engazed shafts at the angle of pier, ornamental and pierced battlements, carved inscriptions, striped facades, metal grilles, geometrical patterns in decorations.... and a great many other elements of architectural beauty that fused and mingled with the style of other nations.

Islam and Music

Many people have a totally wrong impression about the Muslim contribution to Music, believing that it was, under Islam, a much-neglected art. This is not true. In the heyday of Islam, the philosopher al-Farabi was also the greatest living musical theorist and, according to

H. G. Farmer, a Western musical scholar, his *Kitab al-Musiqi al Kabir* continued to attract the attention of Western musicians as late as the Seventeenth Century A.C.

Al-Farabi, who died at Damascus in 950, devoted three of his major works to the theory of music but he was also quite obviously a brilliant executant and a fertile composer. "Ancient chants attributed to him are still sung by the Mawlai dervishes" says Hitti "while many stories are told of his beautiful playing of the lute. In the presence of his patron Sayf al-Dowlah, he is said to have held all his listeners spellbound and on one occasion he lulled even the door-keepers to sleep."

Ibn Sina also was greatly interested in the theory of music and the Englishman Roger Bacon thought him the first scholar to realise its therapeutic powers. What Hitti calls "the corner-stone" of Arab musical art was laid in Spain, in the year 822 when the Arab Ziryab arrived in Cordova from the Mawsili school in Baghdad. Not only did Ziryab add a fifth string to the lute, but he also opened a musical school or conservatory. Other schools later opened in Toledo, Valencia and Granada, and—most important of all—in Seville.

Seville became famous for the manufacture of musical instruments in which it developed an export trade and was for musicians what Cordova was for scholars.

It was a Christian monk, Adelard of Bath, who was [illegible] the first person to introduce Arab theories of [illegible] the Latin world, by translating several Arab works on mathematics, one of which, by al-Khwarizmi, had a

section on music. Adelard studied music at Paris in the first half of the Twelfth Century where he had access to many old Greek manuscripts on music that had been translated by Muslim scholars.

The end of the Twelfth Century saw an entirely new principle in Christian music one that was introduced by Arab scholars. This was the mensural principle that notes have an exact time value among themselves. The "rhythm" had long been a constituent of Arab music.

"Mensural music", says Philip Hitti, "was probably the greatest but certainly not the only contribution the Arabs made in this branch of knowledge. Two of the instruments that have aided most in the progress of the art of music, the lute (Arabic *al-ud* through Spanish *laud*) and the rebec (Arabic *rabab* through Spanish *rabel*) were introduced into Western Europe by the Arabs."

Hitti goes on to give a list of other instruments, popular in Western music to-day, which owe their origin to the Arabs including the old trumpet, the tambourine, the cymbals and the guitar. The "rebec", of course, was the precursor of that most popular of Western instruments, the violin.

Arab influence on Western music spread, however, not because of theory but, purely and simply, because the people liked it. The Christian population of Spain accepted and delighted in the poems and ballads that the Moors brought to Spain and, equally, they accepted and delighted in the tunes and rhythms to which these lyrics were sung. Muslim musicians flourished at the courts of the Spanish Kings and, long after the fall of Granada, it was Moorish

dancers and entertainers who continued to entertain the people of Spain and Portugal. Recent researches by the Spaniard Ribera suggest that the popular music of all South Western Europe in and after the Thirteenth Century is Andalusian in origin. From Spain it can then be traced back to Arabic sources and to Persian, Byzantine and Greek sources that would have been entirely lost to the West if Arab scholars had not preserved, translated* and interpreted them in terms of their own original genius.

Islam and Horsemanship

To include Horsemanship amongst the arts may seem to the reader to be a trifle frivolous, but it should be remembered that in the glorious days of Chivalry in Spain it was not only proficiency in literature and music and painting that won acclaim. Horsemanship was studied with concentrated zeal and great skill achieved both in the riding and breeding of horses.

"The French, and German and English nobles," writes John William Draper, "imbibed the Arab admiration for the horse, they learned to pride themselves on skilful riding. They tried to emulate that Arab skill which had produced the celebrated breed of Andalusian horse."

Other Entertainments

Entertainment must certainly be included amongst the arts. In addition to musical entertainments the Arabs excelled in story-telling and in a kind of story-telling illustrated by skilful and stylished *shadow-play*. It is probable that they brought the idea of shadow-play to Europe from the Far East but the development from the

* For the importance of the Arabs as translators please see Appendix 2

shadow-play of the *puppet play* was almost certainly Arab in inspiration. Puppet plays rich in comic genius flourished in the Thirteenth Century and they may well be considered the fore-runners of certain types of Western entertainment to-day.

Philip Hitti also considers himself beholden to the Muslims for the introduction of *chess* into Western Europe. Though not invented by the Arabs it is easy to see why a people given to producing some of the greatest mathematicians that the world has known were quick to recognise the possibilities of that fascinating game of skill.

The art of "gracious living" certainly cannot be considered synonymous with "civilisation", yet it cannot be excluded from any definition of it. To many facets of gracious living the Muslims also made valuable contributions.

ISLAM AND EDUCATION

The Spread of Education under Islam

Education spread through the Muslim world with electric speed. "Educating a child", the Holy Prophet once said, "is better than giving gold in charity" and, acting on that injunction, the first four Caliphs of the Umayyad period saw to it that elementary education for all was introduced into their newly conquered territories. Schools sprang up in places like Makkah, Madinah, Yemen Damascus, Cairo, Alexandria, Kufa, Baghdad, Basrah, Neshapur, that were to become great centres of learning and research but even the most remote villages of Syria, Iraq and Egypt were not neglected.

There was no village, no city or town without at least one mosque and primary and secondary schools sprang up as adjuncts to mosques. Professor Ballasteros, a distinguished Spanish scholar and his fellow-countryman Professor Ribera tell us that schools were provided for nearly all children free of cost. For higher education students went either to colleges, academies and universities or to individual teachers. Rulers, princes, kings, ministers, and well-to-do people, zemindars and wealthy magnates regarded it as their solemn duty to patronise learning, hold academic discussions, open schools and colleges, set up laboratories, and to establish hospitals, libraries and observatories

In its origins, all Islamic education was theological and the first institutes of Higher Learning were meant for

advanced theological studies. Such a seminary was set up by al-Mamun in Baghdad, in 830, and to it was attached a famous observatory for the study of the stars. In 1065 Nizam-ul-Mulk endowed the great college of *Nizamiya* which also dealt with more than one aspect of learning.

The establishment of *Nizamiya* was a landmark in the history of Muslim education. Reuben Levy, writing in Cambridge in 1929, said in his "Chronicles of Baghdad" that many details of its organisation, for example the fact that it was residential, were copied by the early European universities. At Nizamiya, to cite another detail, the lecturer stood on a raised dais, while students sat on stools and plied him with written and oral questions. Al-Ghazali lectured there for four years and it was there that he put forward the theory that Education must be more than a mere process of memorisation, saying that the teacher must also stimulate the moral consciousness of his students. At *Nizamiya* the students were reasonably disciplined and had some sense, too, of *esprit de corps*.

Nizamiya survived the Mongol onslaught and eventually amalgamated with the university of *Al-Mustansariyah* This university had an excellent library and also a bath-house and kitchen to minister to the physical needs of students in residence.

Other famous universities founded were *Al-Rashidiya*, *Amaniya*, *Turkhaniva*, *Khatuniya*, *Sharifiya*, (in Syria) and *Rambiyyah*, and *Salahiyyah* (in Egypt). There were, at a later period some thirty colleges of the Nizamiya type in Baghdad, thirty in Alexandria, six in Mawsil, and one,

at least, in Neshapur, Samarkand, Ispahan, Merv, Balkh, Aleppo, Ghazni and Lahore. The Sultan Salaheddin was to turn Damascus into "a city of schools" and he was also responsible for building a great many in Egypt as well.

During the Muslim occupation of Spain many colleges and seminaries were founded. Cordova alone had several hundred colleges and in some of these subjects such as philosophy, literature, history and science were taught, in addition to theology. Other great universities were founded at Seville, Malaga and Granada and over their portals were carved the words: "The world is supported by four things only: the learning of the wise, the justice of the great, the prayers of the religious and the valour of the brave", words which express the principles still governing modern universities today. Students from all over Europe, Africa and Asia flocked to these universities and found a welcome there.

From the earliest days of Islam, Muslims were encouraged to do all they could to further the cause of education. Reverence for learning is a distinctive feature of Islam and this, together with the great Muslim virtue of charity, led to innumerable endowments, scholarships and grants. In addition to endowing theological colleges, rich Muslims helped to found hospitals which also served as medical schools, and observatories where students were taught mathematics and astronomy. Money was also frequently bequeathed to libraries and especially to the mosques where many famous scholars were proud to teach.

For the majority of Muslims the mosque was always the chief centre of education. Here learning was denied

to no one whatever his creed. Liberal endowments made it possible for even the poorest students to attend lectures, while special lodgings were set apart for travellers, free board being given to those in need. Advanced scholars too, frequently received financial help so that they could devote themselves to study and a lectureship at a mosque became a coveted distinction. Nasir Khusro writing in the Eleventh Century said that the Mosque at Cairo was attended by some five thousand students* who came to hear lectures on a great variety of subjects. The great Mosque of Cairo, al-Azhar, had been built and endowed by the Fatimid Caliph Mu'izz (969—970) and his endowment was greatly augmented by his grandson, Hakim. Hakim, according to the German orientalist Hammer† also endowed three other mosques and an Academy of Learning, thereby setting a fashion which called into being a vast succession of endowments throughout the country.

The Spread of Education in Muslim Spain

Wherever Islam spread education benefitted, in Spain, perhaps, most of all. Under the partonage of al-Hakam II al-Mustansir (961—976) A.C. university education in Spain received a great impetus.

Al-Hakam II Al-Mustansir (961 to 976 C.E.) was himself a scholar and his great belief in learning led him to grant munificent bounties to students and also to establish free schools in his capital. Under him the University of Cordova founded in the principal mosque by 'Abd-al

*At Baghdad the famous jurist and theologian, Malek ibn Anas Bukhari is said to have attracted an audience of twenty thousand students.

† Gemaldesaal, Vol. III, page 218

Rahman III rose to a place of pre-eminence among the educational institutions of the world. It took pride of place over both al-Azhar of Cairo and Nizamiya of Baghdad and attracted students, Christians and Muslims, not only from Spain but from other parts of Europe, Africa and Asia. Al Hakam enlarged the University and beautified it and to it he invited professors from the East, setting aside endowments for their salaries from his personal fortune. The historian Ibn al-Qutiyah and the philologist Abu Ali al-Qali were professors of this University. Al-Hakam II was also a bibliophile and his agents ransacked the bookshops of Baghdad, Alexandria and Damascus with a view to buying or copying manuscripts for the Cordovan library. The books thus collected numbered four lakhs (4,00,000), their titles filled a catalogue of forty-four volumes, and in each volume twenty sheets were devoted to poetical works alone. Al-Hakam was probably the best scholar among all the Muslim Caliphs, and his marginal notes on certain manuscripts rendered them highly prized by later scholars.

Nor was it only at the University level that education flourished in Spain. Al-Hakam II, after completing the construction of the great Mosque of Cordova, turned his attention to Elementary Education, endowing it with one-fourth of his landed property and directing that its annual income should be divided among the poor of Spain.* One other institution of this Prince calls for notice. In his time, primary schools were good and numerous in Muslim Spain. In Andalusia nearly every one

*Adhari, Vol. II, p. 250.

could read and write while in Christian Europe, persons in exalted position - unless they belonged to the clergy remained illiterate. Hakam, however, believed that instruction was not as widely diffused as it ought to be, and in his tenderness for the poorer classes he founded in the capital twenty-seven seminaries in which children of poor parents were educated free, the teachers being paid out of the Caliph's privy purse.*

Professor J. B. Trend of the University of Cambridge summed up the Muslim contribution to education in Spain as follows:

"During the golden age of Islam excellent schools were established both in the Middle East and in Moorish Spain and Portugal. Libraries were filled up with books. These centres attracted students from all over Christendom. Among those who studied in schools of Toledo were Michael Scott, Daniel Morley, Adelard of Bath and Robertus Anglicus the first translator of the Qur'an."

The Muslim Contribution to Education in the Indian Sub-continent

Our own sub-continent is in debt to Muslims for the majority of its great educational institutions. The Sultan Nasiruddin† was a great patron of learning and in 1211 he set up the first *madrassah* in Delhi. This was called the *Nasiriyya.* Nasiruddin's successor, Balban, also looked favourably upon scholars, many of whom fled to his court

*Dozy's "Spanish Islam", page 545. Adhari, Vol. II, page 256.

†Nasiruddin used to live by selling copies of the Quran copied out by himself and according to the historian *Ferishta* he forbade his bookseller to tell prospective customers who had done the work as he did not wish his name to be a reason for raising the price.

when Central Asia was invaded by the Mongol tyrants. Balban gave these scholars *Jagirs* in different parts of his kingdom and there they established schools. Ferozabad rapidly acquired the fame, previously enjoyed by Samarkand and Bokhara, as an international centre of learning. At the Sultan's own library the great Amir Khusro became librarian.

It was under the Khiljis, however, that Muslim education in India reached its zenith. Ziauddin Barni tells us, the most wonderful phenomenon that the people saw in the reign of Alauddin Khilji was the assemblage of great men of all nationalities, -scholars, poets, scientists, doctors, artists, etc., in the capital of Delhi which, owing to the presence of so much diverse talent and men of learning became the envy of Baghdad, the rival of Cairo and the equal of Constantinople. Muhammad Tughluq, the scholar and learned king of Delhi who was a great learned man and a poet, used to hold discussions and debates on various subjects at his court, was a great patron of learning and spent huge sums for the promotion of learning and the spread of education ... There were about one thousand colleges in Delhi alone and there was no conceivable branch of learning in which instructions were not provided in these institutions."

Muhammad Tughluq's successor, Feroz Shah Tughluq, showed an even greater zeal for the cause of Education. He spent as much as 1 crore and thirty-six lakhs for the education and welfare of his people, building thirty colleges in Delhi alone and starting a residential university wherein students as well as professors were maintained at govern-

ment expense In the famous history of his reign, *Futuhat-i-Firozi*, written by himself the Sultan Feroz Tughluq writes "I have considered it my duty to repair every public edifice of public utility constructed by my predecessors, such as Caravansarais, mosques, wells, reservoirs of water, canals, almshouse, and schools and have set apart a considerable portion of revenue for this purpose."

The *Madrassah* established by Feroz Shah, with its learned Principal Maulana Jalaluddin, was to be another great centre of Muslim learning in the East to which people thronged from all over the sub-continent. Feroz Shah also established technical schools for his subjects to train them in different trades and professions, and an Employment Bureau to solve the problem of unemployment. He caused many Sanskrit books to be translated into Persian. Even the tyrannical Nadir Shah loved books enough to carry away such books as had been left behind in the Delhi library by Taimur Lame—also a great lover of books—to his own library in Persia!

The Muslim rulers who broke away from the Delhi Sultanate also did much to promote education in their kingdom. The Bahmani Sultans of Deccan extended their educational activities into the villages by granting very generous endowments to village mosques and educational institutions. Mahmud Gawan, the learned Minister of three successive Bahmani Sultans, established a very large College at Bidar, the ruins of which still exist to tell the story of great impetus given to education by the Bahmani Sultans. Sultan Qutb Shah of Golconda encouraged and helped education and learning by establishing colleges

and public seminaries, while Sultan Husain of Bengal established a large college in memory of his patron Saint Kutub Alam.

Meanwhile, in Delhi, Education continued to flourish. All the Mughal kings of Delhi were great lovers of learning and encouraged education in all ways. Syed Muqaddar, Minister and historian to Sultan Zahiruddin Babur wrote in his history that one of the functions of the public works department under Babur was to look after old colleges and schools and to build new ones. His son, Humayun was a poet and a keen student of astronomy and geography. When he regained the Delhi throne he established a college there and turned a pleasure-house, which the usurper Sher Shah had built, into a fine library. Unfortunately he later fell down the staircase of this library to his death.

The Emperor Akbar established many schools and colleges where Hindus and Muslims received the same instruction. Blockmann, a European scholar who visited Delhi during Akbar's time found a great college founded by Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri "like which few travellers can name." Akbar also set up a large library of rare books and appointed a full-time librarian, Mullah Pir Mohammad for this library. Several other schools and colleges were founded by Akbar, at Agra, Delhi, Ahmedabad and in many other cities, where students of all nationalities could go for a higher education. These colleges were mostly residential and liberal monetary help was given by the Government for their maintenance. Besides Government educational institutions, many private schools and colleges

were founded and maintained by the nobles and grandees of the Imperial Court at Delhi and at other places and Courts such as Mir Ali Beg's academy at Agra. In 1561, Akbar's nurse Maham Anga founded a College at Delhi.

Akbar's son, Jehangir, the author of the *Tarikhi Jame Jahan* writes that he repaired all schools, Madrassahs and colleges even those which had been abandoned as long as thirty years previously, filled them with students and professors and liberally helped them with money. Shah Jehan was also devoted to Education, founding and maintaining a College near the Jama' Masjid of Delhi. A European traveller who visited Delhi during his time found 24,000 books in the Imperial Library of Shah Jehan in 1642 C.E.

Aurangzeb likewise showed extraordinary zeal for the spread of education among his subjects, ordering all the provincial Governors of his kingdom to help poor students with scholarships and stipends. He introduced compulsory education among the Baharas of Gujrat and imposed heavy punishment on truants. At Lucknow he turned a Dutch trading station into a big Madrassah. Inspired by his zeal, many private persons of his time such as Qazi Rafiuddin established colleges. Another such was endowed at Ahmedabad in 1697 by Maulana Akramuddin at a cost of Rs. 1,24,000 in 1697; and a Madrassah at Sialkot was liberally endowed by Moulvi Abdul Hakim.

During the reign of Bahadur Shah and Muhammad Shah opening of new colleges continued. Big men and princes established many Colleges such as a College by Ghaziuddin, another by Firoz Jang. Even during the time of the

weak successors of Aurangzeb the pace of education was not halted Indeed the reign of these later Mughal emperors saw the heyday of educational progress in India, and some of the finest poets and numerous learned men and calligraphists that India was to produce. Nizam-ul-Mulk. Saadat Khan of Oudh, Alivardi Khan of Bengal, Tipu Sultan of Mysore, were all educated rulers devoted to the cause of popular education, including the education of women.

Many learned women flourished under Muslim rule in India among them the Sultana Razia, a highly accomplished princess well versed in politics and Hafiza Jamal, the daughter of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti who devoted herself whole-heartedly to the cause of education. The famous historian, Stanley Lane Poole, writes that the Emperor Babur received his education from his mother Qutlug Nigar Khanam. Gulbadan Khanam, a daughter of Babar was another highly educated princess famous as the authoress of the *Humayun-namah*. Gulrukh Khanam, another daughter of Babar was well-versed in Persian and Turkish literature, while a niece of Emperor Humayun, Salima Sultana, was another fine poetess. Akbar's nurse Maham Anga, already referred to above for the school she established was a champion of education for the common people while Sultana Chand Bibi, Nur Jehan, Mumtaz Mahal, Rukhya Begum, teacher of Shah Jehan, Nadira Begum, wife of Dara Shikoh, princesses Zeb-un-Nisa'a, Jahan A'ra and Roshan A'ra, daughter and sisters respectively of Alamgir, —all were highly educated and accomplished women.

Causes of the Triumph of Muslim Education throughout the World

Joseph Hell in his well-known book, *Arab Civilisation* explains why education was bound to flourish wherever Islam spread, in these words, "Islam encouraged a noble ambition for learning, a craving for learning, a spirit of tolerance, a restless ambition to extend wider and yet wider the frontier of knowledge which so distinguishes the Muslim mentality and stimulated lofty purpose."

The historian Crawford, in the second volume of his book further analyses the reasons for the outstanding success of the Muslims as educators.

"They (i.e., the Muslims) did not come as conquerors like the Spaniards, in the 16th Century, or use the sword as an instrument of conversion—nor did they arrogate the privilege of a superior and dominant race so as to degrade and oppress the original inhabitants: *but coming simply in the guise of teachers they employed all their superior intelligence and civilisation in the service of their religion rather than as a means towards their personal aggrandisement and the amassing of the wealth.*"*

The Basis of Education in Islam

Having now seen the way in which Education spread with Islam let us now take a closer look at the basic principles of that Education.

Education for a Muslim child began at home with his father's duty to teach him "the word" (*Al-Kalimah*). By six he was held responsible for the ritual prayer after

*Vide Crawford, Vol. II, page 263.

which he would attend the nearest mosque for the beginnings of a formal education.

Here, at this elementary stage, he would concentrate on learning to read and to write, his text-book being the Quran and his goal the ability to read it for himself and perhaps, one day, to copy it for others. A saying of Ali "I am a slave of him who hath taught only one letter" shows in what high respect he was required to hold his teacher.

Memorisation of the Quran also played an important part in early training but there were other subjects taught as well. Such as simple arithmetic and possibly some poetry. At this stage girls frequently attended school along with the boys but seldom went on to any higher form of learning.

Encouragement to pupils to go on to a seminary or a university came from the words of the Prophet Himself. "He who leaves home in search of knowledge walks on the path of God, until he returns home" : and again, "God makes easy the path of Paradise for him who journeys for the sake of knowledge".

Nor was a good Muslim ever expected to cease in his quest for knowledge. "Acquire knowledge", the Holy Prophet said, "From the time of your infancy to the time of your death". Muhammad called the struggle for knowledge *al-Jehad-al-Akbar* saying, "The greatest Jehad is the efforts made by a student to overcome ignorance and to strive towards the perfection of knowledge". In this respect the Holy Prophet considered the ink of the scholar more holy than the blood of the martyrs.

The young Muslim, therefore, grew up in an atmosphere which believed in education and which granted to everyone, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, the freedom to learn. This freedom to learn, however, presupposes a freedom to teach, and that too, Islam guaranteed. Anyone who wished could set up as a teacher and although no public examination was required the public character of the system ensured a reasonable competence on the part of all instructors.

Freedom to Teach and Freedom to Learn

Although the education given to a young Muslim boy was mainly theological he was not subjected to a mechanical process of indoctrination or required to absorb, without question, an Islamic ideology. The Quranic verse, "*O'my Allah increase my knowledge*" aptly sums up the attitude required of him towards his religion—Note the word "*increase*"—this is no narrow, confining principle but an ever-widening, out-going, dynamic concept of Education. Dr. Bilgrami, a distinguished educationist enlarges on this theme in his booklet "Some Aspect of Education."

"The Islamic system of Education," he says, "does not merely accept a longer view of life but also a broader and a higher view of life. While making full allowance for the proper development of body, mind and soul, it gives that purpose to life that illumines the whole being. It is the central concept the mainspring, the main purpose of education. It is the Islamic ideal of One God. It must be the goal and ideal of the individual to develop in him some of the Godly qualities, manifest them in his actions and while living in this world still not get lost in this world."

Imam Abu Hanifa, defining the purpose of education under Islam described it as, "the acquisition of *taqwa*" or that "pious conduct" which is considered a requisite qualification for every Muslim citizen. According to Abu Hanifa education means, "the understanding of what makes or mars a soul, the acquisition of power and the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong, between good and bad, in regard to this and the next world and the acquisition of the right and proper capacity to choose the right conduct so that the misguided intellect of man may not lead him stray." Knowledge without its utilization or practice is no education, according to the Imam.

The word *Taqwa* is an all embracing word. It literally means guarding against injury and in the *shariat* legal phraseology *Taqwa* means keeping aloof from all that is injurious to the man's soul and body.

Iqbal thinks of Education in terms of *Tauhid*—equality, solidarity and freedom within the social order of Islam: he sees it, too, as an insight which is foreign to the world of matter but yet illuminates it, as a spiritual quality applied to the understanding of the life lived by an individual among material things, a motive force at once an inspiration and a guide.

Communism, Christianity and Islam

To a communist, education is "an instrument for the communist regeneration of society". In strong contrast to this concept is the Christian view that emphasizes the value of the individual, if necessary even at the expense of society, which encourages self-expression as well as discipline and which aims at producing social-consciousness

within the loose framework of a democracy. Each of these concepts of education produces a different type of human being with totally different aims

Islam, too, produces a distinctive type of person and a more balanced one than either of the others. Islam aims at reconciling both the material and spiritual worlds, the individual and society. The whole object of education as revealed in the Holy Quran is to manifest the manifold and diverse relations of man not only with other men—though that is an important part of an Islamic education—but also with nature, that is with the world around him, and with Allah. Briefly the Islamic concept of Education may be summed up as—the attempt to realise ultimate truth in everyday life.

On such terms every Muslim is free to explore, both as teacher and as pupil, every conceivable realm of knowledge.

The Holy Quran and Learning

The intense desire for knowledge which is a characteristic of Islam is expressed in the Holy Quran by the words:

"O my Allah, increase my knowledge (*Rabbi Zidni Ilma*)."

This urgent need to learn is expressed again and again in the Holy Quran beginning, with the first Revelation to the Holy Prophet:

"READ, in the name of thy Lord Who creates."

"So He began with knowledge and because the men of knowledge are the successors of the Prophet who have left the heritage of knowledge, whoever takes it takes a full share and whoever walks on a certain path seeking knowledge thereby, Allah makes the path to heaven easy

for him and Allah says "Those of his servants only who are possessed of knowledge fear Allah."*

And He has said "And none understands them but the learned."**

And He has said "Are those who know and those who do not know alike?"†

The Traditions of the Holy Prophet and Learning

The traditions record equally emphatic statements on the spiritual value of learning and of the need for all Muslims to expand their knowledge in all ways. The Holy Prophet has said, "He who desires the world must seek it through learning, and he who desires the Hereafter must seek it through prayer."

Also:

"The learned men are the heirs of the Prophet."

and

"Acquire ye knowledge, for the acquisition of knowledge teaches men to fear Allah."

Again we may read:

"Learning is a companion to a person in loneliness, a friend to him in a foreign land, a guide to him when he is in happiness and distress, a weapon which he can use against his enemy and a decoration which he can display amongst his friends."

"With learning Allah raises a people and makes them pioneers in whose path others will follow and whose examples others will take."

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* The Holy Quran 35:28

** The Holy Quran 29:43

†The Holy Quran 39:9.

"The Holy Prophet has also said, "Whosoever's good Allah wishes, He gives him the understanding; faith and knowledge come through learning."

"He dieth not who taketh to learning."

"To listen to the words of the learned and to instil into others the lessons of science is better than religious exercises".

"Whoever revereth the learned revereth Me."

"The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr."

"Seek after knowledge though it be in China."

Nor are women excluded from the pursuit of knowledge. The Holy Prophet says, "The acquisition of knowledge is a duty incumbent on every Muslim, male and female."

Indeed for all Muslims, "Learning is life for the mind and a shining lamp which leads away from darkness."

It was in such a spirit and encouraged by such words that the Arabs re-lit the torch of learning in Europe and bore it triumphantly aloft to illumine what would otherwise have remained, for the West, the Dark Ages. Education, *inspired by Islam, brought light* wherever there had been darkness before.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS UNDER ISLAM

The Contribution of Islam to Military Affairs

Discipline and Humane Conduct:—The speed, strategy and success of the early Islamic conquests are legendary and need little elaboration here. Lothrop Stoddard in his famous book, "The New World of Islam" gives a splendid summary of their military achievements and their powers of consolidation.

"The other great religions won their way slowly, by painful struggle and finally triumphed with the aid of powerful monarchs converted to the new faith. Christianity had its Constantine, Buddhism, its Asoka, and Zoroastrianism its Cyrus, each lending to his chosen cult the mighty force of their secular authority. *Not so Islam.* Arising in a desert land sparsely inhabited by a nomad race previously undistinguished in human annals, Islam sallied forth on its great adventure with the slenderest human backing and against all odds. Yet Islam triumphed with seemingly miraculous ease and a couple of generations saw the Fairy Crescent borne victorious from the Pyrenese to the Himalayas and from the deserts of Central Asia to the deserts of Africa."

"The Arabs" the same author writes elsewhere in his book, "In their turn knew how to consolidate their rule. *They were no blood-thirsty savages, bent solely on loot and destruction.* On the contrary they were an innately gifted race, eager to learn and appreciate the cultural gifts which

the older civilisation had to bestow. Inter-marrying freely and professing a common belief, conquerors and the conquered readily fused and from this fusion arose a new civilisation—the Saracenic in which the ancient cultures of Greece, Rome, and Persia were revitalised by the Arab genius and the Islamic spirit."

To those people who have been trained to think of the early Muslim soldiers as a horde of fanatics the disciplined and humane attitude towards war-fare which characterised even the earliest days of Islam* will doubtless come as a surprise. Yet it is precisely in the matter of discipline that Islam made its most valuable contribution to Military affairs—a rigid discipline was expected in battle and, after the battle had been won, an equally scrupulous discipline in matters concerning the treatment of the vanquished, the division of the military spoils and the observance of treaties. The first *Army Court* was introduced as early as the reign of Hazrat Omar who created the post of Army Judge. This court decided national and international matters concerning booty on land and sea as well as fulfilling the functions of a present-day Court Martial.

Examples of the discipline of troops and of their superior officers, abound. When Usama, son of the slave Zaid was made a commander of the Arab army for Syria, over the heads of the sons of aristocratic families and of veteran warriors, no murmur was raised against him. When Khalid, the greatest of all commanders was demoted by Hazrat Omar, Khalid submitted to the will of his superior. When the Governor Musa, jealous of Tariq's

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*For examples see Part 2. Section on Tolerance.

victories in Spain, had the great commander whipped and chained Tariq refused to allow his superior forces to rise against Musa, saying: *"I will be the last person to rebel and thereby set an example of indiscipline and insubordination in Islam."*

This discipline was inculcated in every Muslim soldier, from the lowest to the highest, by the teachings of the Holy Quran. According to the historian Deutsch the Quran was the reason for all the astounding victories of Islam.

Deutsch says, "The Quran is a book by the aid of which the Arabs conquered a world greater than that of Alexander the Great, greater than that of Rome *in as many tens of years as the latter had wanted hundreds to accomplish her conquests*: by the aid of which they came to Europe as kings to hold up the light to humanity while darkness lay around."

In the Quran we can find many examples of the military ideal of the Muslims as, for example, in the verse, "Verily Allah loves those who fight in the path of Allah, forming ranks as though they are a wall made of lead." The fact that Muslim soldiers were frequently exhorted to die for their faith, rather than surrender ignobly; also played a vital part in building those "walls made of lead". The words of Musa during the long siege of Granada typify that spirit:

"I see the spirit of the people so cast down that it is impossible to save the kingdom. Yet there still remains an alternative for noble souls—a glorious death. Let us die defending our liberty and avenging the woes of Granada: our mother earth will receive her children into her

bosom, safe from the chains of the conqueror or should any fail of a grave to hide his remains he will not want a sky to cover him. Allah forbid, it should be said the nobles of Granada feared to die in her defence."

A willingness to die in defence is a very different matter from that fatalism which people, ignorant of the Quran are so wont to attribute to all Muslim soldiers. Discipline is a far better word than fatalism for the submission to the will of Allah which those early Muslims showed.

Nowhere is the attitude enjoined on Muslim troops more nobly expressed than in the words of the first Caliph, the pious Abu Bakr:

"Remember that *you are always in the presence of God,* on the verge of death, in the assurance of judgment and hope of paradise. Avoid injustice and oppression. Consult with your brethren and study to preserve the love and confidence of your troops. When you make a covenant or pact, stand to it and be as good as your words." (vide Gibbon in his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire).

On the matter of treaties and pledges the Holy Quran has much to say. A typical injunction reads:

"Fulfil the covenant of Allah when you enter into it and do not break your oaths after you have confirmed them and made Allah your surety."

That quotation indicates the spirit expected of Muslims as between ally and ally. There are also many other injunctions about the binding nature of treaties between the victors and the vanquished, all designed to make warfare as humane as possible.

Rules for Humane Conduct in Warfare. Few people realise that warfare was always held to be a last resort by the early Islamic conquerors. The Holy Quran says, "If they incline to peace, incline thou also to peace and trust in Allah" And again: "So do not falter and *invite to peace when you are uppermost*".

If fighting became inevitable the following rules of conduct were laid down for the guidance of soldiers and commanders:

(1) Unnecessarily cruel ways of killing were forbidden, and also the torturing of the enemy. The Holy Prophet has said, "Fairness is prescribed by Allah in every matter. So if you kill, kill in fairness."*

(2) Killing of non-combatants, women, minors, servants and slaves not taking part in actual fighting, the blind, the monk, hermits, the very old, those physically incapable of fighting was forbidden.*

(3) Prisoners of war were not to be decapitated.*

(4) Mutilation of men and beasts was prohibited.*

(5) Treachery and perfidy were prohibited.*

(6) Devastation of the land, destruction of crops and the unnecessary cutting down of trees were forbidden.*

(7) The slaughtering of animals, other than those necessary for food was prohibited.*

(8) All excesses of any kind were prohibited.*

(9) Adultery and fornication even with captive women were prohibited and the violators were to be stoned to death or whipped.*

(10) Killing of enemy hostages, including even those belonging to states who had murdered Muslim hostages contrary to treaties was strictly prohibited.*

(11) Severing the head of a fallen enemy and sending it to a higher Muslim authority was prohibited on the order of the first Caliph.*

(12) No massacre after conquest could be condoned. In this respect the Holy Prophet set a shining example when he conquered Makkah and showed mercy to all.*

(13) The killing of non-combatant peasants was prohibited, and also of non-combatants such as traders, merchants, contractors.*

(14) Burning a captured man or animal was prohibited.*

(15) Taking shelter behind enemy prisoners and compelling them to fight against their own army was prohibited.*

(16) All acts forbidden under treaties were prohibited so long as such treaties should last.*

Scientific Warfare.—In their later campaigns the Muslims, who produced so many distinguished scientists, pressed science into the service of warfare. In his monograph *Dex Kultur der Arabin*, Professor Hell remarks:

"And just as in our own times, so in the days of Harun al-Rashid science was pressed into the service of warfare. To each corps of archers was attached a body of Naphtha firemen. These naphtha firemen wore fireproof suits and could penetrate into the burning ruins of the enemies'

*Vide Tirmizy, Bukhari, Mawardy, Sarakhsiy.

strongholds. Wherever we turn we come across practices which we fondly believe to be the acquisition and achievement of modern times."

Poison gases and liquid chemicals with evil smells were also known to the Muslims. Poison gas could be used to "terrify the enemy" and "to help in the reduction of forts". (Vide Resalah fil-Harb Walasai and Wal Mortudin M.S.S., Cairo. Fiqh Hanify No. 1080, Ch. 27).

Attacks with chemical smoke are mentioned by Burhanuddin al-Morghinaniy and various formulae for preparing poisonous gases can be found in old Arabic manuscripts. Their indiscriminate use, however, was neither recommended nor permitted.

Invention of the Cannon and Marine Mine.—S. P. Scott in Vol. 3 of his *History of the Moorish Empire* writes, that the Muslims in Spain used a crude form of cannon.* Lawrence in the *Principles of International Law*, says they had also invented a crude form of marine mine.†

Ambulances and Field Hospitals.—The Muslim commanders were prompt to organise medical services in the field, base hospitals and a female nursing service. (See Section 1 on Medicine).

Absence of Disease amongst Muslim Troops.—Infection and disease did not strike at the Muslim troops with anything like the severity that might have been expected in those early days. This was due to the individual cleanliness and personal hygiene which the Quran insists on for every Muslim. At a later date Muslim soldiery was still far in advance of the Western

*P. 634.

†P. 511.

armies in such matters. Lord Eversley speaking of the Turks of Anatolia says:

"The Turks of Anatolia had very valuable qualities as soldiers. They were and are to this day brave, hardy, sober, frugal and cleanly in their habits as inculcated by their religion; *a strong point in their favour when sanitary arrangements were completely ignored by armies.*"

Two Contemporary Opinions of the Muslim Armies.

In the eyes of their contemporaries the Muslim armies were considered superior not in numbers but in their determined sense of purpose and in their disciplined administration. A whole chapter might well be written on the efficiency of their supplies and the speed of their communications. This side of their military might is summed up in the treatise on military tactics attributed to the Emperor Leo VI, the Wise (886 to 912 A.C.) we are told: "*of all the nations, they (Saracens) are the best advised and most prudent in their military operations.*" The following passage from the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (913 to 959 A.C.) describes the impression of dogged determination left by the Arabs on their Byzantine foes: "they are powerful and war-like so that if only a thousand of them occupy a camp it is impossible to dislodge them."

The Naval Supremacy of Islam

The growth of Islamic sea-power had to keep pace with the rapid and extensive military conquests of the Muslims and with their ever-expanding trade and commerce. As early as the second Caliph, Omar, the Muslims had begun to develop their sea-power and the third Caliph, Usman may be considered as the organiser of the first

Muslim fleet. This was based on Alexandria, in Egypt, where a fine dockyard was constructed.

From Alexandria, Muslim warships rowed out against the Byzantines, under the direction of Abdullah,to join forces with those of Muawiyah, who was based on Syria. In 649 A.C. Muawiyah siezed Cyprus, then a Byzantine naval post. This was the first maritime victory won for Islam and the first island to be added to the Muslim State.

In 655 A.C. the combined Syrian and Egyptian fleets under Muawiyah and Abdullah destroyed about five hundred ships of the Byzantine navy off the Lycian coast near Phoenix. The Emperor Constans II, who led the fight, barely escaped with his life. This battle known as *dhul-al-Sawain* (that of the masts) sealed the fate of the Byzantines by ending their naval supremacy, but owing to dissension among themselves the Muslims failed to press their victory home by advancing against Constantinople. In 668 or 669 A.C. a naval force of two hundred ships from Alexandria ventured as far as sicily.

By the time of Hazrat Omar and the Umayyad Caliphs there was a large Muslim fleet, well served by Syrian and Egyptian ports. Further harbours were added as, one after another, the islands off the South Italian coast fell into Muslim hands. Crete, Sardinia, Corsica were conquered, while in Sicily a Muslim State was founded that was to flourish as an agricultural and industrial centre for two hundred years.

During this period , the Ninth Century, many Muslim seamen and officers distinguished themselves, among them Abu Hafa Omar Balluti. Of these great days the Arab historian, Ibn Khaldun says:

"During the time of Muslim supremacy the Muslims held naval mastery. The Christian nations could not withstand the Muslim fleet in any part of the waters. The Muslims rode over the mighty waves of the seas for triumph during the long period of their domination."

Throughout the Tenth Century the Mediterranean was the great centre of the maritime excursions of the Muslim navy. *Muhadiya* built in 916 A.C. was the most renowned port of North Africa. Here there was a strong harbour wall and iron gates to close the dockyard and there were big tanks, and underground ware-houses within the port enclosure. The dockyard, hewn out of solid rock was so spacious that it could accommodate thirty ships at a time. On both sides of the port, there were long chains which were opened to allow ships to enter. Naval expeditions under such famous admirals as Hasan Khalili and Yaqub bin Ishaq were sent out from Mahadiya and it was from here that the ships left to inflict a crushing defeat on the Roman navy at Constantinople and on the Franks.

After their victory over the Franks Muslim naval ships used to anchor on the other side of the Mediterranean in a port called Marsai Ali, now known as Marseilles.

Ship-building yards for the Muslim navy were established in Tunisia and also in Sicily where ships of enormous size, for those days, were built. Some seen by Nasir Khusro in 1047 A.C. were 275 feet in length and 110 feet in the beam.

The Fatimid Caliphs did much to develop the Merchant Navy Service. Lane Poole says of them in his *History of Egypt:*

"Their ships frequented the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and even coast of West Africa and the Straits of Gibraltar."

For the Mamluks the Red Sea was virtually considered their own and it was a Mamluk admiral, Rais Sulaiman who commanded the splendid Turkish fleet of seventy five ships built for the Turkish Sultan Sulaiman.

Sulaiman describes in 839 A.C. two different sea-routes from the Arabian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. The first route, he describes, is from the Arabian Sea via the Sea of China, north into the Pacific Ocean, and then, turning back through the Bering Strait, crossing the Arctic Ocean, from there it goes into the Atlantic, finally entering the Mediterranean through the Straits of Gibraltar. The second route of which he gives a description in his Travel Book is the southern one. This goes from the Arabian Sea straight down the Mozambique Channel and then, rounding the Cape of Good Hope, skirts the African coast until it reaches the Mediterranean again through the Straits of Gibralter.

Muslim naval activities at this time also covered the whole of Atlantic Oceans, extending up the coast of North America and the famous travellers al-Beruni and Nasir-uddin Tusi specifically mention in their books the North Pole and Alaska. Professor Sushtery says, in a discussion of Muslim Naval exploits, "Some bold adventurous sailors had even reached the American coast, six hundred years before Columbus.

Maritime discoveries by Muslim sailors have already been discussed in Section One, in the pages devoted to Geography, Map making and Navigation. The debt owed

by Musim mariners *to the Arab discovery of the compass*, and to Muslim astronomers, was a very great one. In passing we might also mention here that it was the Muslims who first introduced *a system of light-houses*.

The first *Muslim Naval College* was established in Morrocco in 1661 A.C. after the expulsion from Spain of the Andalusian Muslims by King Phillip III. A Muslim Republic was established at Rabat and here the refugees built a College on modern lines to teach pilots and also how to organise a naval flotilla.

Of Muslim naval Power and Europe's debt to Islam in this connection, Professor Hell writes

"The Navy furnishes another striking feature of Muslim activities. As early as the 34 A.H., we hear of the conquest of Cyprus and the expedition to Byzantine. Since then expeditions suggestive of a navy are repeatedly mentioned . . . undeniable is the debt which Europe owes to the Arabs in this very sphere of activity. Witness the numerous nautical expressions which the West has accepted from the Arabs and which, indeed, the West has retained to the present-day. Overwhelming was the Arab influence on the people living on the Mediterranean coast. "That the Arabian Fleet", says Von Kramer, "was a model in many ways to those of the Christian countries, is patent from the fact that many Arab nautical terms have been preserved in the languages of Southern Europe, such as Cable, Arabic *Hable*, Arsenal, Italian Darsenal (Arabic *Dar-ul sanah*), Corvette, which comes from the Arabic *Ghurab*, *i.e.*, Raven."

The Institution of the Post Office

While the military and naval might of Islam was extending its empire throughout the known world communication became an increasing problem. Out of the new needs grew the postal system, representing Islamic genius at its practical best.

Hazrat Omar was the first Caliph to pay special attention to the problem of getting dispatches, and booty, back home. Among the Umayyads, Muawiyah was the first to interest himself while al-Walid extended the service in order to keep in touch with his building programme. Historians give to Harun-al-Rashid the credit for having entirely re-organised the postal service through his Barmakid counsellor, Yahya. Under the Abbasids a Postmaster General was appointed. He was always a man of distinction and learning, and known as the *Sahib-al Barid.*

Primarily the postal service was established to serve the needs of the State. To this end postal offices were set up in each provincial capital and also to make a network covering all the great trade routes. Letters were carried by relays of mules and horses in Persia and by camels in Syria. The Post-office in Baghdad, says Philip Hitti, "had itineraries of the whole empire indicating the various stations and the intervening distances. These itineraries assisted travellers, merchants and pilgrims and laid the basis of later geographical research". Hitti also points out that the post-roads in Iraq to-day still follow the same old tracks

Trained carrier pigeons were also used by provincial post officer to help with the carrying of mail and dispatches.

Civilians could avail themselves of this and other services of the *barid* on payment of a substantial sum of money.

The Postmaster-General was also the Chief of Military Intelligence and Espionage and Provincial Postmasters reported direct to him on matters concerning the administration of their provinces.

Growth of a State Civil Service

Under the Abbasids a number of State Departments grew up, such as an accounts office (*diwan al-zimam*) which was started by al-Mahdi: a chancery (*diwan al-tawqi*) and a board for the inspection of grievances (*diwan al-nazar fi al-mazalim*), designed to set aright any miscarriages of justice. This last named was introduced into Sicily where it struck root on European soil.

Chief of these State Departments, however, was the bureau of taxes of *diwan-al kharaj* which dealt with the *zakah* and other taxes such as *jizyah* for non-Muslims and the *kharaj* or land-tax.*

The Establishment of a Police Department

The Abbasids also established a police system with, as its head, a high official who was also in charge of the royal body-guard. Each large city had its police force, usually a well-paid one and the chief of such municipal forces was called the *muhtasib* or overseer of markets and morals. His duties included seeing that proper weights and measures were used in trade and that there was no adulteration of food. He was also required to prohibit gambling, wine-drinking and any abuses of decent behaviour between the sexes. He was authorised to chastise old men who dyed

*Philip Hitti "History of the Arabs", page 319.

their beards black with a view to gaining favour with the ladies! In fact his duties were far-ranging and various the reason for his appointment being a desire to establish law and order in every walk of life in an era of sudden and unprecedented prosperity.

Baghdad in Abbasid Days.

To get a picture of the way in which an Abbasid city flourished under innovations of the type described above let us now re-construct Baghdad as it was in the time of the great Harun-al-Rashid. This hero of the Arabian Nights was a magnanimous prince, a capable warrior, a patron of letters and of the arts and a most wise administrator.

In his time Baghdad was a gigantic mercantile city built around a huge administrative fortress wherein every department of the State had a properly regulated and well ordered public office. It was a city where schools and colleges abounded, where philosophers, students, doctors, poets, theologians flocked from all parts of the world. The surrounding provinces were calm and well governed, taxes and revenues collected without difficulty, the provincial capitals were embellished with vast public buildings and linked together by an effective and rapid service of posts and caravans, the frontiers were secure and well-organised, the army loyal, efficient and brave, the Governors and ministers honest and forebearing. The empire stretched with equal strength and unimpaired control from the Cilician gates to Aden and from Egypt to Central Asia. Christians, Pagans and Jews as well as Muslims were employed in Government service irrespective of caste

or creed. Traffic and wealth had taken the place of revolution and famine. The disorderly towns were carefully policed and regulated. Pestilence and disease were treated in Imperial hospitals and by Government physicians. There was no rebellion or disorder anywhere in the vast empire.

A Note on Finance

The basis of the financial administration of Islam was the source of revenue known as *zakah*. This was the only legal tax obligatory on every Muslim. Official tax-gatherers collected it from the Believers and it was then disbursed from a central treasury for the benefit of the needy amongst the Believers. Collection was both in kind and in cash.

One of the *many good things* about the system of *zakah* was that it prevented the hoarding of wealth, for hoarded wealth was the first item on which *zakah* was levied. Rich men were therefore encouraged to invest their wealth in trade and industry, a fact which contributed considerably to the expansion of Muslim Commerce and to the general level of prosperity throughout.

In this way *zakah* reinforced the teaching of the Holy Quran which says:

"There are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah: announce unto them a most grievous penalty—on the Day when heat will be produced out of that (wealth) in the fire of Hell and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks and their backs. This is the (treasure) which you buried for yourselves: taste ye then, the (treasure) you buried."*

*Quran. 9 : 34-35.

Literally *zakah* means 'purification' and it may be said to have purified the Believers in three ways—morally, socially and economically. The exact amount given was ultimately left to the Believer's individual conscience and the fact that it would be used for charitable purposes helped him to fulfil one important demand of his Faith. The Quran says "By no means shall ye attain righteousness unless ye give (freely) of that which ye love and whatever ye love and whatever ye give of a truth Allah knoweth well". In twenty-seven verses of the Quran *zakah* and prayer come together which shows its importance to true Believers. Economically *zakah* meant not only that wealth was spread but also that the poor were succoured, while socially it contributed to the ideal of equality amongst all Muslims.

The sole aim of the financial system of the Muslim State is to ensure the greatest good of the greatest number and the process of levelling up is continuous and inexorable. The Holy Prophet has said "All are equal in their human rights" and in the earliest days of Islam the first Caliph attempted to give each man an equal share out of the Central Treasury. Hazrat Ali who followed this principle gave a very wise definition of the rights of the poor. "The rights of the poor in the wealth of the rich is limited to the amount which may supply the needs of all the poor and hence if the poor are hungry or in tatters the cause is negligence on the part of the rich."

The wealthy, however, were not to be exploited and care was taken to see that they were not taxed to the point at which taxation became a burden and private exterprise no

longer worth their while. The whole system of taxation was deliberately elastic; taxes could be imposed temporarily to meet some emergency; and tax exemption might be granted in a period of depression.

The system of Banking which evolved under Islam, was similarly designed to keep as much money as possible in circulation whilst imposing the least possible strain on individual enterprise. Usury of any kind was forbidden by the Quran and its prohibition was enforced by the Police. Instead the Central Bank *lent money free of interest.* At the same time the borrower was required to share profit and loss equally with the Bank, to be in fact a co-partner in that institution as the Bank was in his business enterprise.

The Islamic institution of *Bait-al-Mal* was really just like the State-owned Central Bank to-day with similar functions and duties (except for the issue of currency a function which Islam leaves to the State). Any Islamic State to-day could set up a Central Finance House according to the precepts of Islam. Under this scheme all existing banks could continue with two main modifications: the banks would not pay any interest on deposits received and would not levy interest on any loans made. As this modified banking institution would function for the public good by catering to the industrial and economic needs of the people and by maintaining welfare institutions such as hospitals, the government ought to bear the initial cost of establishing the banks and the incidental expenses of running them, in the same way as it finances State hospitals. Alternatively loans from the banks might be treated as a supply of capital for industrial concerns and the

cost of establishment might be met from the profit of these industries. There is absolutely no reason why such an institution should not flourish in any Islamic State to-day, and there is much to be said in favour of trying it.

Capitalism and communism have both failed to solve the problem which the *Bait-al-Mal* sought to resolve. On the question of distribution of wealth Islam took a stand midway between communism and capitalism. Professor Massignon writes:

"Islam has the merit of standing for a very equalitarian conception of each citizen expecting each one to contribute to the resources of the community. It is hostile to unrestricted exchanges to banking capital, to State loans, to indirect taxes on articles of prime necessity but it holds to the right of the father and the husband to their private property and to their commercial capital. Here again it occupies an intermediate position between the doctrines of capitalism and Bolshevic communism."

In all Quranic statements about finance the thing which most clearly emerges is that all wealth comes from Allah and therefore cannot be allowed to become a monopoly. As the creation of Allah, however, wealth is something worth while striving for and the Holy Quran frequently encourages Muslims to work hard in order to achieve it.

The Holy Quran says, "And when the prayer is finished then disperse ye through the land and seek of the Bounty of Allah and celebrate the praise of Allah often (and without stint) that you prosper."* Earning of wealth was even allowed during pilgrimages.

*Al-Quran, 62 : 10.

The Holy Prphet also encouraged men to earn wages:

"Earning of wealth by honest means is next in importance only to the duty of prayer,"*

and cautioned employers:

"On the day of Judgement I will quarrel with three classes of men, one of these classes is the man who takes complete work out of the wage-earners but does not pay a proper wage commensurate with his works."

Under Islam, *strikes* were prohibited, as were all disturbances of that peace which was so necessary to the progress of newly-settled territories. Should grievances arise, machinery existed for arbitration and negotiation but the whole economy was designed to prevent the need for adjustment from ever arising.

Historians tell us that the Roman empire fell because of the gathering dissatisfaction of the labouring classes. Under Islam such dissatisfaction ought not to be possible. A Hadis says:

"All creation is the family of Allah, the most beloved of Allah is he that does most good to his family."

Islam also asks of all Believers that they give more to society than they take from it.

Such a combination of enlightenment on the part of the employers with a sense of truly "belonging" to the community on the part of the workers anticipated by many centuries the present-day theories of the Welfare State. The system flourished because it had the strongest possible financial backing and a remarkable system of financial equity. Here again we see how closely interwoven, in

*Vide Kanzul Amal, Vol. II.

Islam, are material and spiritual matters. The Holy Prophet said:

"Labour for your worldly welfare as if you were going to live for ever: and labour for your welfare in the Hereafter as if you were going to die on the next day."

What better injunction could there be for labour, capital -and bankers—alike.

Aloof and Impartial Justice

The most important contribution made by Islam to progress in the legal field is that it separated the Judiciary from the Executive. In this the Caliphs set the example, bowing before the law on any necessary occasion like an ordinary citizen. Caliph Omar bin Khattab in a dispute between him and Abu Ibn Ka'ab had to appear in the court of Zaid bin Sabit. When Omar entered the court room the judge vacated his seat and asked Hazrat Omar to occupy it. The Caliph roared "Ibn Sabit, (the judge) this is the first injustice you have committed in this case." Hazrat Omar refused preferential treatment and took his seat by the side of the other party. Caliph Ali also showed a similar awareness of the supremacy of law. When an ordinary labourer brought a suit against the Abbasid Caliph Mansur, the Caliph appeared in person before the judge like an ordinary citizen. Similarly Caliph al-Mamun had to appear before the judge to answer a complaint by an ordinary woman. This supremacy of law is a direct result of Quranic injunctions and of the example of the Holy Prophet. On one occasion a woman of a noble Quresh family committed a theft, the penalty for which was to have her hands cut off. The relatives of the

woman approached Usama bin Zaid to plead for a pardon for her from the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet answered the plea in these words:

"Nations in the past were annihilated because whenever any big person committed theft, or any offence, he was let off but a poor person was prosecuted in similar cases. By Allah even if my own daughter Fatimah had committed theft her hands would certainly have been cut off."

The punishment, as befitted the times, was a harsh one but the principle is one of enduring justice. Once again we see just how much a part of Islam even the humblest of petitioners felt themselves to be.

Epilogue to Part One

Many western scholars have been cited in the preceding pages, some at considerable length. Here, to end Part One are a few succinct quotations by European and American scholars which may serve as a summary, and an appraisal, of what Islam contributed to the intellectual and material progress of the Western world.

"From the barbarism of the native people of Europe who could scarcely be said to have emerged from the savage state, living in wooden hovels and treading upon straw—miserably fed on beans, vetches, even the bark of trees, it is pleasant to turn to the south-west corner of Europe where the Moors had developed a brilliant civilisation."*

"No achievement of ancient or modern time was perfected with such rapidity or produced such decided effect upon the intellectual progress of the human race as that

*Draper. Intellectual Development of Europe. pp. 27-28.

of the Arab Muslims."*

"The Arabs were in advance of the whole world in intellectual and industrial activity."**

"It took Spain under the Muslims less than half a century to reach a point in human progress which was not attained by Italy under the Popes in a thousand years. The capacity of the Arab mind to absorb, to appropriate, to invent, to develop and to improve has no parallel in the annals of any race."***

"The triumphs won by the Muslims in knowledge through six centuries were greater than those won by the sword."†

"In the middle ages, the Muslims (Arabs) were the sole representatives of civilization. They opposed that barbarism which spread over Europe."‡

Stanislas Guyard in his *Encyclopaedia of Religion* says, "In the Middle Ages the history of Muhammadanism is the history of civilisation itself."

* S. P. Scott's Moorish Empire in Europe.

** Gregory's Discovery, page 128.

*** S. P. Scott's Moorish Empire in Europe, Vol. I, page 332.

† Our Elder Brethern, page 122.

‡ Vide "Historians' History of the World", Vol. VIII, page 271

APPENDIX 1

The Muslims and the Library at Alexandria

The belief that Muslims destroyed the great Library of Alexandria when 'Amr Ibn Al-'Aas conquered Egypt is one that has long persisted but which has been proved false by recent Western scholarship. It should be refuted by all Muslims and the author is glad to be able to give his readers the true facts.

The first person to relate the tale of destruction seems to have been Abd-al-Latif al-Baghdadi who died as late as 1231 A.C. almost six hundred years after 'Amr's conquest. Al-Baghdadi claimed that by the Caliph's order, the bath-furnaces of the city were fed with the volumes from its great library but no contemporary writer mentioned any such vandalism. In fact there *was* no library of any consequence in Alexandria at that time, the great Ptolemy Library having been destroyed by Julius Caesar in 48 B.C. Of this occurrence the ancient historian Plutarch writes in his Biographies—"When Caesar saw his fleet in the hands of the enemies he was compelled, in order to escape danger, to set fire to it and the flames extended from the harbour and destroyed the Library" (of Alexandria).

Seneca (46 A.C.) who was also of this opinion, estimated the number of books destroyed by Caesar as four hundred thousand, while Dio Cassius (circa 150—230 A.C.) also speaks of the fire spreading to ware-houses, full of books.

The Emperor Aurelian in 273 A.C. seems to have ordered the destruction of the remnants of this library in revenge for an Egyptian revolt and in the year 389 we learn that a new library, known as the Daughter Library, was destroyed on the edict of the Emperor Theodosius. By the time 'Amr conquered Egypt there was nothing much in the way of libraries left to destroy.

A fascinating book on this subject has been written by Professor Alfred Butter. It is called *Featehal Arab Misra* and it was published in Cairo in 1933. Professor Butter shows how impossible it would have been for a Caliph as pious as Hazrat Omar to order the destruction of books, things on which the Holy Prophet himself had always placed so much value.

On the practical side, Professor Butter points out that in any case the so-called books were not written on paper: they were tightly rolled-up scrolls of papyrus and parchment which would be very difficult to ignite and so much less combustible than paper that they would have been useless as far as raising the temperature of a bath-house was concerned. In fact if the library had existed, which it did not, its burning still could not have had the results which legend attributes.

APPENDIX 2

The Arabs as Translators and as Original Thinkers: Three Phases

"At the time of the Arab conquest of the Fertile Crescent", says Hitti, "the intellectual legacy of the Greeks was unquestionably the most precious treasure at hand". After discussing various translators Hitti concludes, "Before the age of translation was brought to an end all the extant works of Aristotle had become available to the Arabic reader".... These through Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd then found their way into Latin and exercised a determining influence upon mediaeval European scholasticism."

Then came the second phase of Arabic learning, when the translators also became contributors, a phase summed up by Hitti in his *History of the Arabs* as follows:

"The epoch of translation (750 to 850 C.E.) was followed by one of creative activity, for the Arabs not only assimilated the ancient lore of Persia and the classical heritage of Greece but adapted both to their own peculiar needs and ways of thinking. In medicine and philosophy their independent work was no less conspicuous than in alchemy, astronomy, mathematics and geography. In law, theology, philology, and linguistics, as Arabs and Muslims they carried on original thinking and research. Their translation transmuted in no small degree by the Arab mind during the course of several centuries, were,

transmitted together with many new contributions to Europe through Syria, Spain, Sicily, and laid the basis of that canon of knowledge which dominated medieval European thought. And transmission from the standpoint of the history of culture is no less essential than origination, for, had the research of Aristotle, Galen and Ptolemy been lost to posterity the world would have been as poor as if they had never been produced. The line of demarcation between translated and originated work is not always clearly drawn. Many of the translators were contributors.

The final and third phase of Arab scholarship came in the Twelfth Century *when Western scholars went to Toledo to become Arabists with the express purpose of translating the works of the great Arab scholars into Latin*, then the language understood best by all Western students. What Greek learning had been for the Arabs some centuries before, Muslim scholarship was now for the Christian world—a beacon light in the darkness.

PART II

PREFACE TO PART TWO

In the first part of this Anthology the reader has seen something of the intellectual and material progress that characterised Islam. In this second part his attention will now be directed towards something more intangible which may be comprehensively referred to as Human Rights.

The contribution made by Islam towards the development of Human Rights is at once profoundly spiritual and intensely practical. On the practical side, no detail of good human relationships seems to have escaped the code of injunctions embodied in the *Shariat:* on the spiritual side none of these details would have proved workable if it had not been for the belief fundamental to Islam, that all men are created equal by Allah; and also if the spirit of tolerance had been lacking.

Contrary to popular misconception, Islam is the most tolerant of all the great religions of the world and it was because of this tolerance that the Muslim peoples not only envisaged but achieved a society far more enlightened than any that have been created since. Tolerance is at the root of all justice, all internationalism, all understanding, and it was the good fortune of the many countries conquered by Muslims that it was one of the fundamental inspirations of Islam.

For this reason this second part of this book begins with a section on Islam and Religious Tolerance, proceeding

from there to examine the effect of such tolerance on Civil Rights, the Rights of Women, Slavery and the Colour Bar. From a profound belief in the virtue of tolerance to the foundation of a true democracy is only a short step, while a belief in the equality of all men, irrespective of race, creed or colour leads on to a conviction that some form of internationalism must ultimately transcend the strife and conflict of [illegible] inseparable [illegible] nationalism. Thirteen hundred years ago the brotherhood of Islam found a way of establishing and guaranteeing Human Rights, a way which the reader is now invited to examine.

ISLAM AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

"There is no Compulsion in Religion"--The Holy Quran

For centuries Western peoples found it convenient to think of their Muslim conquerors as tyrants who secured conversion to Islam at the point of the sword and who could tolerate the existence of no religious beliefs or customs other than their own. The scholarship of more recent years has hastened to disprove this calumny but, unfortunately the emotions generated by the old slanders still persist, not only amongst Europeans, ignorant of Islam, but also among some of those Muslims who have received a Western education at the expense of neglecting their own intellectual heritage.

"There is no compulsion in religion", says the Holy Quran and history affords many examples of the peaceful occupation, by Muslim commanders of vanquished territories. The English historian, Finlay, writes:

"During the Muslim rule there was no organised attempt to force the acceptance of Islam on a non-Muslim population and no systematic persecution intended to stamp out the Christian religion. Had the Caliphs chosen either course of action they might have swept away Christianity as easily as Ferdinand and Isabella drove Islam out of Spain or Louis the XIV made protestantism penal in France, or the Jews were kept out of England for three hundred and fifty years. The very survival of Christian Churches in Asia to the present day is a strong proof of the

generally tolerant attitude of the Muslim governments towards non-Muslim subjects."

Blood was shed in battles, although there are some examples of bloodless conquests—Muslim commanders were enjoined never to fight without first giving the enemy a chance to surrender but what is so surprising about the Muslim campaigns is the mercy shown to conquered peoples after victories so overwhelming that they could have had no reason to hope for the peaceful and magnanimous settlements that they received. For this humane and merciful treatment of the vanquished the Holy Prophet himself had set the precedent when he returned, as conqueror, to Makkah. Of this superb occasion the historian Arthur Gilman writes:

"It is greatly to his praise that on this occasion, when his resentment for ill usage in the past might have excited him to revenge, he restrained his army from all shedding of blood and showed every sign of humility and thanks giving to Allah for his goodness. Only ten or twelve men who had on a former occasion shown a barbarous spirit were proscribed and of them only four were put to death, but this must be considered exceedingly humane in comparison with the acts of other conquerors, in comparison for example with the cruelty of the Crusaders, who, in 1099 put seventy thousand Muslims, men, women and helpless children to death when Jerusalem fell into their hands....

Muhammad's victory was in very truth one of religion and not of politics. He rejected every token of personal homage and declined all regal authority; when the haughty chiefs of the Quraish appeared before him he asked,

"What can you expect at my hands?" "Mercy! O, Generous brother," said the chief. "Be it so," replied the Holy Prophet, "You are free".*

Mr. H. M. Hydman in his famous book "*The Awakening of Asia*"** has similarly admired the generosity of spirit shown by our Holy Prophet at the conquest of Makkah and Joseph Schacht likewise commented on the indelible impression left on Islam by the personal influence and example of the Holy Prophet on that occasion.† Professor Nathaniel Schmidt in the *New International Encyclopaedia*, 1916, also praises the Holy Prophet who, he says, "belonged to that exclusive class of Prophets who laid down principles of conduct nobler than those they found and devoted themselves fearlessly to their high calling, being irresistibly impelled to their ministry by a power within."‡

Caliph Hazrat Omar

Acting on the precedent set by the Holy Prophet many subsequent Muslim conquerors were to show a similar spirit of tolerance towards the peoples they had defeated. Such a man was the Caliph Hazrat Omar, whose tolerant treatment of the Christians, when he captured Jerusalem, is specifically commented on by Draper in Vol. 2 of his, "*The History of Intellectual Development of Europe*". Draper also compares the humanity of the Muslims on this occasion with the way in which the Christians were to Massacre the Muslims when they recaptured the city some centuries later: He says, "When Caliph Omar took

*The Saracens, London 1887, pages 184-85.

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†Vide Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol. X. 1933.

‡Vol. XVI, page 72.

Jerusalem in 637 A.C. he rode into the city by the side of the Patriarch Sophronius, conversing with him on its antiquities. At the hour of prayer he declined to perform his devotion in the Chruch of the Resurrection in which he chanced to be at the time, but went outside and prayed on the steps of the Church of Constantine for, said he to the Patriarch,—"had I done so, the Mussalmans in a future age might have infringed the treaty under colour of imitating my example." But in the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, in 1099, "the brains of (Muslim) children were dashed against the walls, infants were pitched over the battlements; men were roasted at the fire, some were ripped up to see if they had swallowed gold...."

Hazrat Omar, on the contrary, had been so anxious about the possible fate of non-Muslims in his country after his death that he had even given the following instructions to his successor in office from his death-bed:

"I enjoin on him with regard to the people who enjoy the protection of Allah and his Prophet (i.e., the non-Muslims) to keep covenant made with them, to fight in their defence and not to lay on them a greater burden than they can bear."

Salahuddin in Jerusalem and Egypt

Another great Muslim ruler who was famous for his tolerance was Sultan Salahuddin, of whom even the Christian monk, Benedict of Peterborough, felt obliged to speak highly, saying that by his personal character and conduct the Sultan set before the Crusaders the beauties of Islam. Indeed some of the Christian Knights were so attracted

by the character of Salahuddin that they abandoned Christianity and embraced Islam.

Certainly when Jerusalem finally fell into the hands of the Muslims, in 1244, A.C., the Christian population seems to have welcomed the new masters and to have submitted quietly and contentedly to Muslim rule.†

During the reign of Sultan Salahuddin (1169—1193) over Egypt the condition of Christians there was also very happy; the taxes imposed upon them were lightened and several swept away altogether. Christians crowded into public offices as secretaries, accountants and registrars; and for nearly a century under the successors of Sultan Salahuddin they enjoyed the same toleration and favour and had nothing to complain of except the corruption and delinquency of their own clergy.*

Muslim Conquerors Preferred by Christians to Conquerors of their own Faith

The tolerance shown by Muslims to Christians resulted, on several occasions, in the Christians actively preferring to remain under Muslim rule. In the Twelfth Century, Michael the Elder, Patriarch of the Greek Church in Antioch, saw in his Muslim conquerors, "the Finger of God." He believed God had sent them to avenge his people for the cruel persecution they had suffered under Heraclius and his Romans. In the quotation given below the spelling is that used by the Patriarch.

"This is why the God of Vengence, who alone is all-powerful and changes the empire of mortals—beholding

*Vide Renaudet, page 388.

† See Finlay, Vol. III, page 358.

the wickedness of the Romans, who throughout their dominions cruelly plundered our monasteries and churches and condemned us without pity—brought from the region of the south the sons of Ismail, *to deliver us through them from the oppression of Romans* . . ."

It was no slight advantage to be delivered from the *cruelty* of the Romans, their *wickedness*, their wrath and cruel zeal against us and to *find* ourselves at *peace*."*

A similar preference for Muslims as conquerors was voiced when the Muslim army reached the valley of Jordan and Abu Ubaidah pitched his tent at Fehl. The Christian inhabitants of the country then wrote to the Arabs: "O, Muslims, we prefer you to the Byzantines, though they are of our own faith, because you keep better faith with us, are more merciful to us and refrain from doing us injustice and your rule over us is better than theirs, for they have robbed us of our Gods and homes."†

When the army of Heraclius drew near the city of Emessa the citizens closed the gates, saying to the Muslims that they preferred Muslim government and Muslim Justice to the injustice and oppression of the Greeks, their own co-religionists.‡

In the provinces of the Byzantine Empire conquered by the Muslims the Christians of all sects enjoyed perfect toleration which they never enjoyed before. The extent of this toleration—so striking in the history of the Muslim rule—may be judged from the terms granted to the con-

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*Vide Michael the Elder, Vol. II, page 412-13.

†Vide Azdi, page 474.

‡Vide Baladhuri, page 137.

quered cities. Here again example is furnished by Hazrat Omar in the agreement he made with the Grand Patriarch of the City of Jerusalem when it was surrendered to him—"In the name of Merciful Allah, this is security which Omar, the servant of Allah, commander of the Faithful, grants to the people of Jerusalem. He grants to all, whether sick or sound, security for their lives, their possession, their churches and their crosses and for all that concern their religion. Their churches shall not be turned into dwelling places nor destroyed, neither shall they nor their appertunances be in any way diminished nor the crosses of the inhabitants nor aught of their possession nor shall any constraint be put upon them in the matter of their faith nor shall any one of them be harmed."*

Tolerance of the Otteman Sultans

The great French poet and historian, Lamartine, describes, in his eight-volume, *History of the Ottomans* how the Turkish Sultan, Muhammad II, immediately established the principle of religious toleration in Constantinople by making an example of a Muslim soldier. The incident occurred at the beginning of his triumphal entry into that city.

"The Sultan got off his horse and, in front of the Cathedral of Saint Sophia, took his yatagan and cut off the head of a soldier who was busy wrecking the holy altars."

Lamartine goes on to show how determined the Sultan was not to allow his victory to become abused.

"The Turkish Sultan refused to alter anything and Turkish religious tolerance became evident right from

*Vide Tabari, page 2405.

the beginning, he left the Christians their churches and the freedom to worship in their own way. He kept the Greek Patriarch in his functions free from interference."

One of the first acts of Muhammad II was to proclaim himself protector of the Greek Church and also as protector of the life and property of all Greek Christians. It was to Turkey, too, that many of the Spanish Jews fled from persecution at the end of the Fifteenth Century. Victims of religious persecution in Europe still looked on Turkey as a refuge in the Seventeenth Century when Macarious the Patriarch of Antioch, writing about the atrocities perpetrated by the Catholic Poles said:

"God perpetuate the empire of the Turks for ever and ever. For they take their impost and enter into no account of religion of their subjects whether they be Christians, Jews, or Samaritans, whereas these accursed Poles were not content with their taxes and titles from Christian brethren but oppress them for their religious creed."*

Muslim Tolerance in Spain

So tolerant of the Christians were the Muslims in Spain that a Fanatic Christian Archbishop actually cited Muslim tolerance as a reason for their expulsion. Writing in 1602 A.C. on the *Apostacies and Treasons of the Moorish Muslim* the Archbishop of Valencia recommended their expulsion to Philip III in the following terms:

"That they (the Spanish Muslims) commended nothing so much as that liberty of conscience in all matters of religion which the Turks and all other Muslims suffer their subjects to enjoy."

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*Vide Macarious Vol I page 165, 183.

A Spanish Muslim, one of the very last to be expelled from Spain, protested vehemently against the inhuman persecution conducted by the Catholic Inquisition not only against Muslims but against Christian Protestants as well. In vindication of his own faith he wrote, in 1610:

"Did our victorious Muslim ancestors ever once attempt to extirpate Christianity out of Spain when it was in their power? Did they not suffer your forefathers to enjoy the free use of their rites and religion at the same time when they were under Muslim rule in Spain? Is it not the absolute injunction of our Holy Prophet that whatever is conquered by the Muslims should be permitted to preserve their own pristine persuasion? If there have been some examples of forced conversion, they are so rare and scarce as not to deserve mentioning, and only attempted by men who had not the fear of Allah and the Prophet before their eyes, and, who in so doing have acted directly and diametrically contrary to the holy precepts and ordinances of Islam, which cannot without sacrilege be violated by anyone who would be held worthy of the honourable epithet of Islam. You can never produce among us any blood thirsty formal tribunal on account of different persuasion in points of faith that in any way approaches your execrable Inquisition. Our arms, it is true, are ever open to receive all who are voluntarily disposed to embrace our religion; but we are not allowed by the sacred Quran to tyrannise over consciences. Our proselytes have all possible encouragement and rights and as soon as they professed Allah's unity and his Apostle's Mission they become one of us without any reserve and distinction to

taking to wife our daughters and being employed in posts of trust, honour and profit."*

The French historian Professor Renan says that the toleration practised by the Muslims when they occupied Spain has never been equalled since. Pointing out that the schools and universities were usually in the Mosques Renan goes on to say that students of all religions were freely admitted, "The taste for science and literature had by the Tenth Century established in this privileged corner of the world (namely Muslim Spain) *a toleration of which modern times offer us no example.* The Christians, Jews and the Mussalmans spoke the same tongue, sang the same songs and participated in the same literary and scientific studies. *All the barriers which separated the various peoples were effaced, all worked with one accord in the work of a common civilization.*"

In his account of the Conquest of Spain, Dozy writes:

"The condition of Christians under the Muslim rule was not the cause of much discontent.... The Arabs were very tolerant; they did not harass anybody in matters of religion. For this the Christians were grateful to the Arabs; they praised the tolerance and justice of the Muslim conquerors and preferred their rule to that of the Germans and Franks."

Forcible Conversions Unwelcome in Islam

Amongst responsible Muslims forcible conversions to Islam have never been welcome and although from time to time fanatics have misunderstood the principles of Islam

* Vide Morgan, Volume II, pages 297-[illegible]

many examples can be found of people who have been allowed to revert to their faith.

A European historian writes, "When Moses Maimonides, who under the fanatical rule of the al-Mowahads had feigned conversion, fled to Egypt and, once there, declared himself a Jew, a Muslim Jurist from Spain denounced him for his apostacy and demanded his death. Al-Qadi al-Fadil Abd-al-Rahim bin Ali, one of the most famous of Muslim judges and Prime Minister to Salahuddin the Great, declared "*no man who had been converted by force could rightly be considered a Muslim.*"

In the city of Tabriz, at an earlier date, an Armenian Merchant was murdered by a Haji for refusing to become a Muslim. When the Governor of the City heard of this he exclaimed "What, is that the way in which the sacred religion of Islam spreads"! He at once had the Haji arrested and put to death and his body cast ignominiously to the dogs.

In the reign of Ghazan (1295—1306 A.C.) some Buddhist monks who had made a pretence of being converted to Islam were allowed to revert to their own faith and to return, unharmed, to Tibet. The traveller, Tavernier speaks of similarly magnanimous treatment towards some apostate Jews from Ispahan who, during the reign of Shah Abbas II (1642—1667 A.C.) had been tricked into declaring themselves Muslims. When the Shah realised that their conversion had been inspired by fear, and not by faith, he allowed them to turn back to their own beliefs and to go back to Ispahan.

Interference with the Christian Religion a Punishable Offence

It was not only attempts at forcible conversion which were punishable by death. Under many rulers any attempt to interfere with the rights of Christian worshippers was punishable by death. A memorable example is furnished by the Charter of Uzbek Khan.

The great Uzbek Khan who was the leader of the Golden Horde from A. C. 1313 to 1340 and a zealous champion of Islam, seeking to spread the faith throughout Central Asia, nevertheless remained true to the fundamental Islamic principle of toleration. The Charter which he granted to the Metropolitan Christians in 1313 A.C. is one of the most tolerant of Muslim Historic documents.

"By the Will and Power, the Greatness and Mercy of the Most High, Allah, Uzbek to all princes great and small—let no man insult the Metropolitan Church of which Peter is the Head or his servants or his churchmen, let no man seize their goods or people, let no man meddle with the affairs of the Metropolitan church since they are divine. Whoever shall meddle therein and transgress our edict, will be guilty before Allah and feel His wrath and be punished by us with death."*

Muslim Tolerance of the Egyptian Christians

At all times, and in all circumstances, it is enjoined upon Muslims to try and preserve harmony in human relationships. The conquest of Egypt provides us with an interesting—if somewhat extreme—example of the lengths to which a ruler was prepared to go to ensure the rights of the people he had conquered.

*Vide Karamzin, Vol. I page 341–344.

Shortly after 'Amr ibn-al-'Aas had been made Governor of Egypt a deputation visited him led by the Christian Archbishop. A marble statue of Jesus had been defaced, presumably by a Muslim soldier and the nose cut off. 'Amr received the deputation cordially and said he was so shocked by the occurrence that he would gladly pay the cost of a new statue. This suggestion did not, however, meet with the approval of the Archbishop, who felt that the honour of his Faith could only be satisfied if the Christians were allowed to set up a statue representing Muhammad and then cut off its nose. 'Amr, horrified by the suggestion, yet managed to restrain his anger, saying calmly—but with great sorrow: "You propose to make a statue of our Holy Prophet, a man who, after great and continuous struggle, succeeded in abolishing idol-worship: and then you want to humiliate him by breaking his nose—all this before our eyes. We would sacrifice all our property, our lives, our children even before we could allow ourselves to witness such a profane act. As I have taken upon me the responsibility of protecting your lives, property and religion I am prepared instead to cut off the nose of any one of us and to give it to you." The Bishop agreed. The following day Christians and Muslims assembled in their thousands in the maidan to see how the Christians would be avenged. 'Amr addressed the great gathering, explaining the circumstance of this most sorrowful incident. Then he called the Archbishop to his side and declared solemnly—"You are the head of the Christians and I am the head of the Muslims here. We conquered you; now the solemn responsibility of ruling this country is mine. I must accept

the punishment for the insult that has been offered to your religion for it is the mark of the weakness of my administration. Take this sword and cut off my nose." With that, he handed over his sword to the Bishop.

At this startling turn of events, the spectators stood amazed and stupefied, wondering what would happen next, but just as the Bishop was about to cut off 'Amr's nose, a Muslim soldier hurriedly confessed to the crime, crying out "I have cut off the nose. I am the guilty one. Look, here is the nose, it is I who must be punished. The Governor is quite innocent. Cut off my nose." He rushed forward asking the Bishop to cut off his nose before the astounded assembly. So impressed was the Bishop, however, by the whole proceedings that he threw away the sword and cried out "Blessed, a thousand times blessed, is the soldier, the Governor and above all that noble Prophet whose ideal and teachings have produced noble men like these soldiers and the Governor: it was wrong to break the nose, it would be an immeasurably greater misdeed to mangle the face of noble human beings like the soldier and the Governor".

Muslim Tolerance of Churches and Temples

"As a general principle," writes Mr Adam Mez, "a Muslim government never interfered with the worship of non-Muslim subjects: in fact it looked with favour on the frequently noisy celebration of Christian feasts. . ." Examples of the churches, synagogues and temples of other religions continuing to flourish unharmed by Muslim armies of occupation abound; while in districts where there was only one place of worship, Christians and Jews

were frequently allowed to make use of the building for their own religious rites. Here again it was the Holy Prophet who set the precedent when he permitted the Christian deputation from Najran to worship in the mosque at Medinah.

Caliph Omar bin Abdul Aziz, once again following the Holy Prophet's example restored to the Christians of Damascus a church that had been taken from them.

"As a devout Muslim he was gracious to the members of the other creeds—Christians, Jews, and Fire-worshippers were allowed to retain their synagogues, churches and temples. In Damascus al-Walid had taken the basilica of the Church of John the Baptist and incorporated the site in the mosque of the Ommayads. When Omar became Caliph the Christians complained to him that the Church had been taken from them. He ordered the return of the site taken from the Church for the mosque to the Church as before."*

This shows a very different attitude from that shown by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain to the Muslim mosque at Toledo. *Under the Muslims, Jews and Christians had been allowed to pray in the mosque on alternate days*, but as soon as the Spanish Christians gained their victory the mosque was re-consecrated as a Christian Church and forbidden to people of other faiths.

The tolerance shown by Hazrat Omar to "the fire-worshippers" of Damascus redounds to his credit even more than his tolerance of the Christian "people of the book", for the pernicious doctrine of the Zoroastrians.

*Vide The Encyclopaedia of Islam.

with its belief in the dual powers of Good and Evil, is particularly abhorrent to Muslims, as are also their magical practice. Nevertheless, as the historian Mr M. N. Roy points out, even the Zoroastrians, "did not altogether forfeit the toleration of the conquering Arab. As late as the third century of the Hijrah, ancient temples of fire stood splendourously over-shadowing the modest mosque at their side".

A specific example may be taken from the reign of al-Mu'tasim (833 842 A.C.). On one occasion an Imam and a Muazzin destroyed a fire temple and made a mosque in its place. In response to a complaint lodged with him the Khalifa ordered the Imam and the Muazzin to be flogged for the destruction of the fire temple.*

Muslim Tolerance of Hindu Practices and Temples

During the Muslim conquest of India a spirit of toleration prevailed. Von Kramer writes, "The Hindus were allowed to build temples, traffic with the Muslims, live without fear and strive to better themselves in every possible way. *There cannot be a better example of toleration than that which the Arabs granted to the Hindus in Sind.*"

Von Kramer also says that "the customary honour and deference due to Brahmins was maintained", while Hindu preachers like Sankaracharya, and successors of his such as Madhavananand and Nimbark were at all times given freedom to preach.

So liberal was the treatment of the Hindus by the Muslims that, during the many hundred years of their rule Hindus frequently fought on the side of their Muslim

*Vide Chwolohn, Vol. I, page 287

conquerors even against their co-religionists. During the rule of Alauddin Khilji Hindus rose to high positions as a reward for their services, while under Sher Shah, special arrangements were made to ensure the comfort of Hindus in serais and hospitals.

All the Mughal Emperors treated their Hindu subjects generously. Their temples were safeguarded and the priests were allowed to blow conch-horns and to process with Hindu images. The Hindu Begums were allowed to worship their own Hindu deities in their palaces.

It is popularly believed that the Emperor Aurangzeb was a fanatic tyrant who oppressed the Hindus, destroyed their temples and imposed *jazia* on them but modern research gives a direct lie to these stories. Letters from him to his sons, and to other Muslims, and copper plates discovered, reveal him as treating Hindus with tolerance and show that he even made large endowments for the maintenance of their temples. Nor did he subject them to unfair taxation of any kind.

Tolerance through the Ages

The spirit of religious tolerance in Islam has persisted throughout the ages. Visitors to the Christian monastery of St. Catherine on the Sinai Peninsular are frequently impressed by the long history of Muslim tolerance evident even in that small corner of the world. Near the Christian monastery, so near that it is almost touching it, there is a Muslim mosque, built in 1106 A.C. during the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt. During all the intervening centuries there have been no outbreaks of intolerance, even though the sound of the Christian bells have been penetrating

into the mosque for some eight hundred and fifty years.

It is an impressive record.

Tolerance is Inherent in Islam

Mr. M. N. Roy explains the persistence of this spirit of tolerance by pointing out that it is inherent in, and inseparable from Islam.

"The basic doctrine of Islam—'there is only One God' itself makes for toleration. If the whole world with its defects and deformities, the entire mankind with all its follies and frivolities, is admitted as the creation of the self-same God, the believer in this elevating doctrine may deplore the deformities and may laugh at what appears to him to be absurdity and perverseness but the very nature of his faith does not permit him to look upon them as the work and worship of some other God of evil and declare war upon them as such. Those who worship differently are for him mistaken and misled brethren but none-the-less the children of the self-same Father, to be brought to the right path or indulgently tolerated until they are ready for redemption."

Chapter and Verse from the Quran can be readily found in illustration of the above analysis for example:

"O people! Be careful of (your duty to) your Lord Who created you from a single being (iv-i).

"O Mankind, We created you, from a male and a female and made you into families and tribes so that you may know each other" (49:13). "For each of you have We prescribed a Law and a Way. If Allah so willed He would have made you one community." (5:48). "To every people have We appointed rites which it observes." (22:67).

"Those who believe and those who are Jews and the Christians and the Sabeans—whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good work, they will have rewards with Allah and no fear shall come on them nor shall they grieve." (2:62). "If it had been thy Lord's will they would all have believed—all who are on earth. Wilt thou compel mankind against their will to believe." (10:99).

From the above verses it is clear that there will be many peoples with different faiths, beliefs, practices, rites and customs who must nevertheless be allowed to live side by side with the Muslims. Islam accepts the truth of the mission of all true Prophets and no distinction is made between them.

Referring to the one-ness of all human creation the Quran says, "So Allah raised Prophets as bearers of good news and as warners."

And, more explicitly still:

"Say, O' Muslims We believe in Allah and in that which is revealed to us and that which was revealed to Abraham and Ismail and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and that which Moses and Jesus received and that which the Prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them and unto Him we have surrendered. (The Quran 2:136).

To the "people of the book" the Quran says:

"O' followers of the Book (Jews and Christians), come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any one but Allah (God) and that you shall not associate aught with Allah and that none of us take others for lords beside Allah."

And again, to the Jews:

"Those (Jews) who make common cause with the Muslims and fight on their side shall form one people with the Muslims and they shall enjoy our help and sympathy and shall be protected from oppression and vexation."

Muslims are specifically forbidden by the Holy Quran, to deface the churches or temples of other religions.

"Do not abuse those (deities) whom they call upon besides Allah out of spite, lest they abuse Allah out of spite, through ignorance. Thus unto every people have We made their deed seem fair" (6:109).

The Quran also declares: "And if any one of the idolaters seek thy protection (O, Muhammad) then protect him so that he may hear the word of Allah, and afterwards convey him to his place of safety."

This spirit of toleration may be summed up briefly, yet entirely, in the following words from the Holy Quran:

"Say: (It is) the truth from the Lord, then whosoever will, let him believe and whosoever will, let him disbelieve."

Voluntary Conversions to the Quran

The excerpts in this section have shown that conversion by the sword, being entirely contrary to the true spirit of Islam, was seldom perpetrated and that Muslims were punished if they attempted any such compulsion. It remains now for us to remark on the number of voluntary conversions to Islam that occurred during the period of Islamic expansion, conversions not inspired by fear but by respect. In the same way that many of the Christian crusaders felt impelled to embrace the faith of Salahuddin,

so many thousands of simpler people saw, in the tolerance with which they were treated by their Muslim conquerors, an ideal and a faith that they wished to emulate. Speaking of the phenomenal number of voluntary conversions to Islam the Dutch historian, Van Gut Schmidt says:

"The willingness to embrace a new religion (Islam) after a foreign conquest (by the Muslims) is a fact which rarely figures in antiquity. Indeed *Islam stands alone in this victory.*"

The famous historian, Dozy, commenting on the willingness of the conquered to accept Islam says:

"This phenomenon appears at first a striking mystery, *especially when we know that the new religion was not imposed on anybody.*"

It was, of course, just because the element of compulsion was lacking that Islam was freely embraced by such an overwhelming number of converts.

Tolerance is Islam's Strength

The great writer and orientalist Marmaduke Pickthal sees in religious tolerance the great strength of Islam:

"Let no Muslim when looking into the ruin of the Muslim realm, a ruin which was encompassed through the agency of those very people whom the Muslims had tolerated and protected through the centuries at a time when Western Europe thought it a religious duty to exterminate or forcibly convert all people of another faith than theirs—let no Muslim seeing this, imagine that toleration is a weakness in Islam. It is the greatest strength of Islam because it is the attitude of truth." God is not the God of the Jews only or of the Christians or of the Muslims

only, any more than the sun shines or the rain falls only for the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims; nor is paradise held to be an exclusively Muslim institution as the Quran bears witness. "Whoever surrendereth his purpose towards God, while doing good to men surely his reward is with his Lord and there shall be no fear come upon them, neither shall they suffer." (Quran 2:112).

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ISLAM TO HUMAN RIGHTS

The Civil Rights of Non-Muslims

Muslim tolerance was so much part of the spirit of Islam that toleration of the religion of non-Muslims went much farther than the mere protection of their churches and temples. The civil rights of non-Muslims were also guaranteed.

In countries occupied by Muslim forces the non-Muslim communities could count on the security of their life and property against the payment of *Jizya*. It is frequently believed that this tax was a Muslim invention designed as an imposition on non-Muslims but some sort of poll-tax had long been prevalent under the Romans and Persians. *Jziya* was nothing new to the peoples now conquered by Islam: what was new was that the Muslims guaranteed protection for all who paid it—"the *Dhimmies*", said Hazrat Ali, "are equal to the Muslims in the eyes of the law. He who enjoys our protection, his blood is like our blood and his blood-money is like our blood-money."

Some non-Muslims who objected to paying *jizya* were allowed to pay *zakat* instead, on agreeing to fight alongside the Muslims in time of need. Among such were the Christian tribe of Banu Taghlib and the people of Jarjoma.

It is significant, also, that both the Prophet and Hazrat Omar helped non-Muslims out of revenue from taxes paid by Muslims into the *Bait-al-Mal*, the Islamic spirit

of charity uniting with the Islamic spirit of tolerance to help the sick and needy of other faiths.

In church matters non-Muslims were, as we have seen, granted complete autonomy. This right to manage their own affairs also extended to domestic issues and internal administration. The distinguished orientalist, Dr. Mingana, commenting on the Charter of Liberty granted by one of the Abbasid Caliphs to the Nestorian Christians points out that it guaranteed freedom of worship, the right to appoint church officers, the protection of church property, and the free exercise of religious rites and duties. He then goes on to discuss the civil freedom enjoyed by the Nestorians, summing up as follows:

"The statutory attitude of Islam in this subject is laid down in clear terms in the said document which proves beyond the possibility of doubt that statutory intolerance was not among the defects of Islam. *The Charter emanates from the Chancery of an Abbasid Caliph, but could an English King, a Dutch Queen or a French President write in the Twentieth Century a more tolerant charter in favour of their innumerable Muslim subjects?*"

The charter referred to above, in following the example set by the Holy Prophet at Madinah, achieved, centuries ago, a respect and toleration for the Civil Rights of a conquered people far in advance of any such achievement in the Western world to-day. Another famous charter of liberty, which shows a true Islamic spirit, was that issued by Khalid bin Walid, the great commander who served the first Caliph, Abu Bakr, and who was known as the Sword of Allah. The charter reads: In the name of Allah

the Compassionate, the Merciful: this is what Khalid Ibn Walid would grant to the inhabitants of Damascus if he enters therein. He promises to give them security for their lives, property and churches. Their city walls shall not be demolished, neither shall any Muslim be quartered in their houses. There-unto we give to them the pact of Allah and the protection of His Prophet, the Caliph and the believers. So long as they pay their taxes, nothing but the good shall befall them."

In matters of laws non-Muslim subjects in an Islamic State had the right to be tried by a member of their own faith even when the offence had been committed against a Muslim, and they were at all times assured of a fair trial. Nor could they ever be arrested and imprisoned merely on suspicion. An example of this may be taken from the early days when Hazrat Omar was Caliph.

On one occasion, a complaint was made to Hazrat Omar that the freedom of the people of Iraq was in peril and they were being arrested on suspicion, the Caliph at once assured the people of Iraq "not to have any fear as in an Islamic State no one can be arrested on suspicion, and no one can be sent to prison without due sense of justice."

Protection, justice and freedom of worship, and also a large measure of autonomy in their own affairs, did not however exclude the non-Muslims from taking important parts in the wider field of national affairs.

"The most amazing feature of the Islamic Government" says the historian Adam Mez, "is the number of non-Muslim Office in the State Service. In their own empire the Muslims were ruled by Christians. Old is the complaint

that decisions over life and property lay in the hands of the protected subjects. Twice in the 3rd century of Hijrah (equal to 9th century C.E.) even the War Ministers were non-Muslims with the result that the defenders of the Faith had to kiss their hands and obey their commands."

De la Jonquiere, a French historian, tells us that Caliph Mu'awiyah (661 680) employed great numbers of Christians in his service. Christians frequently held high posts under other Caliphs, the Christian Uma ben-Yusuf becoming Governor of Anbar in the time of Caliph al-Mu'tadid (829 902). Al-Muwaffaq entrusted the administration of the army to a Christian named Israel, while in the reign of al-Muqtadir a Christian was in charge of the War office. According to Michael the Elder, 'Adad-al-Dowlah (949—982), who ruled over South Persia, had a Prime Minister, Nasr bin Harun, who was a Christian.

As Von Kramer points out, in the first volume of his history, non-Muslims enjoyed a high degree of respect and prosperity under Islam. Legally no calling or profession was barred to them, including those posts in Government service. Lucrative occupations such as banking and large commercial ventures were also permissible, as was the medical profession. In Syria, for instance, most of the financiers were Jews and most of the scribes and physicians were Christians.

Because the Muslims looked on the *dhimmis* as their equals inter-marriage was felt to be permissible and even as something to be encouraged.

The Quran itself lays down the injunction regarding the behaviour of Muslims with non-Muslims, in the

following verse:—

"Allah does not forbid you, with regard to those who have not made war against you on account of your religion and have not driven you out of your hearth and home, to show kindness to them and deal justly with them, for Allah loves those who are just." (60:8).

Islam allows marriage with non-Muslims who follow a revealed religion. The Quran says:

"This day are (all) good things made lawful for you. The food of those who have received the scripture is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them. And so are the virtuous women of the believers and virtuous women of those who received the scripture before you (lawful for you) when ye given them their marriage portions and live with them in honour, not in fornication, nor taking them as secret concubines." (5:5).

The Rights of Muslim Refugees

When a Muslim refugee or *muhajir* fled from a non-Muslim State to a Muslim State he could count on immediate citizenship, with all the rights enjoyed by other Muslims. If needy he would be assisted out of the *zakat* until he himself could shoulder his fair burden of taxation.

The simple justice of this system greatly increased the solidarity of Islam.

Islam and the Rights of Women

Woman, as created by Allah, is the equal of man. About fourteen hundred years ago Islam recognised this truth and upheld the woman's claim to her own individuality. Among the rights granted to women was the right to earn their own living and also the right to receive a just wage for work done. The Holy Quran says "Men shall have the

benefit of what they earn and women the benefit of what they earn." (Quran 4:32) and there are many other injunctions that show a constant concern about the treatment of women, about the rights of wives and the care of widows and the importance of mothers. In all matters whether mundane or spiritual the Holy Quran confers equal opportunities.

"Whoever does good, *whether male or female* and is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did." (Quran 16:98).

Also the Holy Quran says:

"Surely the man who submits and the woman who submits, and the believing men and the believing women and the obeying men and the obeying women and the truthful men and the truthful women and the patient men and the patient women and the humble men and the humble women and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women and the fasting men and the fasting women and the men who guard their chastity and the women who guard their chastity and the men who praise Allah and the women who praise Allah—Allah has prepared (for all of them) forgiveness and mighty rewards." (33:36).

In the matter of Equal Pay for Women the Holy Quran anticipated by many centuries what women in western countries to-day are still only just beginning to achieve. The Property Rights for Women, married, unmarried and widowed, were also even in the earliest days of Islam far in advance of these which prevail in Twentieth Century France to-day.

Islam has always made it clear that a woman has full control over her property and over properties she may inherit from relatives.

The Quran says:

"And give the women their dowries willingly but if they of their free will remit a part thereof, then enjoy it as something pleasant and wholesome." (Quran 4:5). And again: "Men shall have a portion or share of what the parents and the near relatives leave and women shall have a portion or share of what the parents or near relatives leave". (Quran 4:8).

The Holy Prophet is reported as having said that the best Muslim is the one who treats his wife best, and also, that if a Muslim brings his daughter up well and makes suitable arrangements for her happiness the doors of heaven are opened for him. Tradition says too that the Holy Prophet said "The best Muslim is the one who treats his wife best" (Vide Tirmudhi)

The Holy Prophet constantly urged Muslims to respect their womenfolk. He himself always stood up whenever his daughter came to visit him. He is also reported to have said "Paradise is at the feet of the mother." A Canadian Judge, Mr. Justice Crabites, says of him.

"Hazrat Muhammad was probably the greatest champion of women's rights the world has ever seen."

This opinion is also borne out by the famous French writer, Andre Servier, who writes

"Muhammad sought to make himself the champion of of women, of whom he speaks with benevolence and whose position he tried to ameliorate. Before his reforms,

women and children could not inherit and what was worse, the nearest relation of the deceased took possession of the women and their property in the same way as he took over his slaves together with their savings. Muhammad gave the women the right to inherit and often insisted in their favour. His last sermon at Mecca contained these memorable words, 'Treat your wives well, they are your helpers and can do nothing by themselves.' He well knew that if a woman is a slave by day, by night she is a queen and her influence is at all times worthy of consideration."

When one considers how primitive some of the tribes were that were conquered by Islam and how few rights women had even in the most civilised countries in those days then one sees that Islam, in the matter of rights for women as in so many other matters, was centuries ahead of other religions and ethical systems. In fact the Quranic injunction:

"And treat them (womenfolk) *with tenderness*." (4:19)

sums up a whole social revolution.

In a previous section, on Military Affairs, we saw that this concern for women was also extended to protect the rights of the women of conquered countries and of women belonging to the enemies of Islam. This too shows a humane spirit far in advance of the period.

Amongst Muslims, the Muslim women could achieve high position and influence. In the section on Chivalry in Spain we saw how learned some Muslim princesses were. Philip Hitti says, that the ordinary women were also privileged.*

*Hitti, "History of the Arabs," p. 333

"Not only do we read of women in the high circles of that early period (of Islam) achieving distinction and exercising influence in State affairs, such as al-Khayzuran, al-Mahdi's wife and al-Rashid's mother, 'Ulayyah, daughter of al-Mahdi; Zubaydah, al-Rashid's wife and al-Amin's mother, and Buran, al-Mamun's wife, but of Arab maidens going to war and commanding troops, composing poetry, and competing with men in literary pursuits or enlivening society with their wit, musical talent and vocal accomplishments."

In Part One of this anthology we saw, in the section on Education, how every Muslim girl had the right to learn, and in the section on Medicine we read of the nursing services which Muslim women joined to help their menfolk at the battle-front. Many stories exist of the bravery of Muslim women on such occasions. One of the most famous tells of how, at the battle of Qadsia some women volunteers armed themselves with thick sticks and marched in ranks to give the impression of reinforcements arriving. They so rallied the spirit of the sorely tired troops that the tide of battle turned and the Muslims achieved an overwhelming victory over the Persians. At the great battle of Yarmuk a special contingent of Muslim women acquired great distinction under the leadership of Juwariya, the daughter of Abu Sufian. Imam Bukhari has written several chapters on the active part played by women on the battlefield as nurses, water-carriers, grave-diggers and – in great emergencies as actual combatants

Marriage and Polygamy under Islam

Western people, ignorant of the truths of Islam, frequently attack Islam because they imagine that it permits

forced marriages and encourages polygamy. Neither of these accusations is true.

As far as marriage is concerned Muslim jurists insist on the consent of the woman before the contract is drawn up and the Holy Quran forbids the contracting of a marriage against the woman's wishes. Verses 4-5 of the Quran say that the rights of the bride must be safeguarded by a fixed dowry and in some cases Islam also requires the consent of the bride's guardian before she can be taken to her husband's home.

Far from forcing the bride into an unsatisfactory marriage, the Quran actually encourages freedom of choice in marriage. "Do not prevent them from marrying their (former) husbands if they agree between themselves in a decent manner." *

By entering into marriage the woman does not forfeit her individual property but rather acquires new rights and responsibilities.

On the subject of polygamy we find that far from encouraging it Islam issued injunctions designed to *restrict* what was common practice amongst all the Arab tribes at that time. Instead of innumerable wives, the good Muslim was not allowed to take more than four and then only if he could prove himself able to provide adequately for each of them and to treat each of them with equal justice. This represented an enormous improvement in the condition of Arab women at that time.

In the Twentieth Century few Muslims have more than one wife and though some have two, four wives are

*Al-Quran. 2:232

very seldom found. It is however arguable that polygamy as practised in the East still represents a considerable advance over the system that prevails in the West of monogamy plus prostitution. On this subject Mrs. Aney Besant, a woman well-known as a theosophist and as a champion of the rights of women said in one of her lectures:

"When we see the thousands of miserable women who crowd the streets of western towns during the night, we must surely feel that it does not lie in the western mouths to reproach Islam for its polygamy. It is better for a woman to live in Muhammadan polygamy united to one man only with the legitimate child in her arms—surrounded with respect than to be seduced, cast out into the streets—perhaps with an illegitimate child outside the pale of law—unsheltered, and uncared for to become a victim of any passer-by night after night, rendered incapable of motherhood, despised of all."

Of the relationship between the wife and the husband the Holy Quran speaks in inimitable language:

"They (your wives) are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them". (Quran 2:187).

While the Holy Prophet said on his last pilgrimage to the Ka'ba:

"O my people you have certain rights over your wives and so have your wives over you. They are a trust of Allah in your hand so you must treat them with kindness."

"The Hidden Flowers of Islam."

The comparative seclusion of Muslim women has led many Westerners to assume that they are backward and

incapable of taking their place in a modern world. Mr. Justice Crabites thinks very differently. Muslim women he calls "the hidden Flowers of Islam" and he goes on to say that they are by no means timid or unassertive. Quoting from his experience in a Muslim country in the Middle East he tells how, should the need arise, Muslim women will come out of their seclusion and plead their own case eloquently and courageously. The reason why they are able to do this, the Judge thinks, is because the true cause of courage is purity and loftiness of character. Muslim women, proverbially pure and exalted, still endeavour to live up to the ideals in which their menfolk believe and which the teachings of Islam have safeguarded throughout the centuries.

Islam and Slavery

At the time when the armies of Islam were conquering three continents the common practice of victors was to take as many enemy prisoners as possible in order to hold them to ransom or to keep them as slaves. Islam did not abolish slavery all at once but what it did do, and from the very beginning, was to make the ownership of slaves a matter of conscience for every single Muslim. It also encouraged Muslims, to give their freedom to such slaves as they already owned.

From the earliest days of Islam we find Muslim thinking on slavery far in advance of its time. The Holy Prophet enjoins, "O believer do not ask your bond man or bond woman to bring your meals or water for your ablution and do not call your slaves your slaves; because after all you are all servants of Allah. Therefore call your slaves as 'my

boy, my son, my daughter'. O believer, cause your bond man or bond woman to sit and have his, or her meals together with you, and if your meal is not sufficient for two at least let him or her have with you a few mouthfuls. Whoever sets free a Muslim slave Allah shall exempt a member of his family from hell-fire." (Bukhari)

The Holy Prophet, speaking about Prisoners of War said, "Your prisoners of war are your brethren, Allah has placed under your control; so whoever has his brother under control should feed him from what he eats and should give him clothes to wear from what he wears and do not impose on them a task which should overpower them and if you impose on them such a task, then help them in doing it."

The word 'slavery' in the Quran is used, almost always, in connection with war captives but nowhere in the Quran can one find slavery sanctioned in any way. The selling of slaves is expressly prohibited and so, too, is the co-habitation of Muslims with female slaves without marriage. On this point the Quran says:

"Marry those among you who are single, or the virtuous ones among your slaves, male or female. If they are in poverty Allah will give them means out of His Grace! For Allah encompasseth all, and He Knoweth all things." (24:32). The Quran also commands, "And let those who cannot find the means for marriage keep chaste until Allah enriches them out of His Grace. And such of your slaves as seek a writing (of emancipation) write it for them if you are aware, ought of good in them, and give them of the wealth of Allah which He has given you and do not

compel your slave-girls to prostitution when they desire to keep chaste in order to seek the frail goods of this world and whosoever compels them, then surely after their compulsion Allah is Forgiving and Merciful (24:33).

As with so many of the Islamic virtues it was the Holy Prophet himself who set his followers a practical example. Once a Quraishi chieftain is said to have complained to Muhammad "O Muhammad, how can we sit near you when you have among your companions people of the lowest ranks such as the slaves Bilal and Zaid. If you remove them then we may come to you." The Holy Prophet strictly rejected this proposal and the nobility were required to address Bilal as "Our Lord" and to serve under Usama, the son of Zaid, when he was appointed Commander of the Syrian Expedition. In this way the Arab nobility learned to appreciate at first hand—and to accept wholeheartedly—the Islamic doctrine of equality.

One of the first of the freed slaves to become a distinguished scholar was Suhaib. He rose to such a trusted position as adviser to the Second Caliph Omar, that on his death-bed Omar asked that Suhaib should conduct the funeral prayer and also that he should administer the State as Caliph until the new Caliph was chosen. This Suhaib did for three days during which time he was obeyed implicitly by the Prophet's son-in-law and the Quraish nobility Suhaib later married Zainab, the cousin-sister of the late Caliph, thereby demonstrating that "equality" under Islam is no empty definition but a living truth.

When 'Amr Ibn-al 'Aas conquered Egypt for Hazrat Omar he saw that the country lived by exploiting slave labour.

The report he sent back shows that he too had absorbed the teachings of Islam to the extent that slavery had become abhorrent to him.

"The crowds of husbandmen who blacken the land may be compared to a swarm of industrious ants, and the native indolence is quickened by the lash of the task-master. But the riches they extract are unequally shared between those who labour and those who possess."

'Amr Ibn al-'Aas's son, however, was less enlightened until one day he received a reprimand from Hazrat Omar himself. The son had thrashed, and afterwards imprisoned, an Egyptian officer. The officer escaped and appealed to the Caliph for justice. Much saddened by such behaviour on the part of a Muslim, the Caliph said to 'Amr and his son: "O 'Amr, since when did you begin to make people slaves when their mothers bore them as free men."

Under the Saracens Egypt, which had previously been exploited by the Romans and Greeks, prospered and many former bondmen became free members of the Islamic community. A similar result was to be found wherever Islam spread in subsequent centuries. As Professor Noldeke points out: "Whoever went over to Islam received the same rights and undertook the same duties as the highest and the meanest believer. There are no reserved pews in a mosque. Islam kept alive the sparks of human dignity in the souls of millions of down-trodden and exploited serfs in Africa and Asia."

In the Christian countries of Europe, slavery flourished throughout the Middle Ages, and we hear how, in 1492, the Pope empowered the King of Portugal to sell Muslims

into slavery. England came later on the slave-trading scene, the slave-trade reaching its peak between 1680 and 1700 A.C. when over six million negroes are said to have been sold to Jamaica and to the plantations of North America by private companies. The Abolition of Slavery in England did not come until the Nineteenth Century, the British Government having been unwilling to interfere with private interests until forced to do so by public opinion. In the United States abolition was delayed still further.

A well-known traveller in Africa, one Mr. Joseph Thompson, wrote to the London "Times" on November 14th, 1887 a letter on the subject of slavery in East Africa.

"I unhesitatingly affirm and I speak from a wider experience of Eastern Central Africa than any of your correspondents possess that if the *slave-trade* thrives it is because *Islam has not been introduced* in these areas and for the strongest of all reasons that the spread of Muhammadanism would have meant the concomitant suppression of slave-trade."

The civilising influence of Islam in East Africa is discussed in more detail in a subsequent section where many distinguished authorities will be seen to have come to the same conclusion.

A very comprehensive quotation from the Quran on how a Muslim can achieve righteousness specifically mentions the emancipation of slaves as a worthy cause for charitable giving. The Quran says:

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East or the West, but righteousness is that

one should believe in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets *and give away wealth out of love and for Him to the near of his kin, the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for the emancipation of captives* and keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate; and be the performer of their promise and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of stress—these are they who are true to themselves and who guard against evil" (2:177).

Throughout the centuries good Muslims have striven to follow the injunctions of the Quran concerning slavery, injunctions that have been summed up by a distinguished and objective student of Islam, Lord Headley. Lord Headley says:

"Islamic teachings do condemn slavery and they do aim at its abolition."

Islam and the Colour Bar

There is no colour bar in Islam. To many Westerners this simple statement of fact may seem hard to believe but it is none the less true. Muslims recognise the diversity of races in the world as manifestations of Allah's creative power:

"And among His signs are the creation of the heaven and the earth and *the variety of your language and your colours*. Verily these are signs for those who know." (Holy Quran 30:22).

If all the races are equally "among His signs" then any form of racial discrimination becomes unthinkable. All people belong to Allah, all are created perfect by Allah whatever their colour. The Holy Quran explains that,

"Hast thou not seen that Allah causeth water to fall from the sky, and We produce therewith fruits of diverse hues, and among the hills are streaks white and red, of diverse hues, and (others) raven-black. And of men, and beasts and cattle, in like manner, diverse hues" The erudite among His *votaries* fear Allah alone (35:27-28).

The lack of a colour bar in Islam, together with the Muslim willingness to tolerate the customs and beliefs of other races was one of the main reasons why Islam was so quickly entrenched in territories which might otherwise, as time went by, have risen in revolt against their conquerors William Macdougall gives a very clear picture of the kind of thing that actually happened when the armies of Islam vanquished new territories

"The ethical system of Muhammad was planted by him among a people whose tribal creeds and cults were locally restricted and very primitive. It spread with astonishing rapidity showing a tremendous power of assimilation. *Peoples of most diverse races—white, yellow, and black—and of the most diverse creeds, codes, yielded before its onslaught and were welcomed within the fold*, for it accepted all men without question, destroying race prejudices and national sentiments. It abolished caste and ignored colour and broke down all barriers that divide man from man – The Arabs mated freely with the Negro and the yellow races, with the Malayan, the Mongol, the Tartar. The extremely rapid spread of the Muslim system was due, no doubt in part, to the simplicity of its code and to the relatively simple nature of its sanctions, for these enabled it to appeal effectively to all men. Its code was not too

lofty for human attainment; its sanctions were not too remote and ethereal for effective appeal to common human nature. But most of all, its success was due to the real equality it gave to all its converts. All were made equal in the eyes of God, and man and the career was opened to all the talents. Such multiplicity of contacts of diverse elements of race and culture, such manifold crossing and bending of human stocks as were thus effected, could not fail to be immensely stimulating to human productivity. And so the rapid spread of the Muslim system was followed by the rise of a civilization astonishing both by the rate of its development and by the richest variety of its achievements."

Dr Dhalla in his well-known book, "Our Perfecting World" remarks, "*Muhammadanism alone among the religions of the world has remained free from the colour bar bias*.... It welcomes all converts with open arms whether they be Negroes or Pariahs. Without reserve it accords to them their rights and privileges and receives them into its social circle as much as into its religion. *It excludes all barriers of birth and colour* and admits its converts within the community on the basis of complete social equality."

Sir Wilfred Blunt comments on the way Muslims feel free to inter-marry with people of other colours in the moving passage that follows It is taken from his book *The Future of Islam.*

"Islam has so much to offer to the children of Man that it cannot fail to win them—so much more than any form of Christianity or European progress can give. The

Christian missionary makes his way slowly in Africa. He has not true brotherhood to offer to the Negro except in another life. He makes no appeal to the present and senses no dignity in the man he would convert. What Christian missionary takes a Negress to wife or sits with the Negro wholly as an equal? The Muhammadan missionary from Morocco meanwhile stands on a different footing. He says to the Negro, "Come-up, and sit beside me. Give me your daughter and take mine." All who pronounce the formula of Islam are equal in this world and in the next. In becoming a Mussalman even a slave acquires immediate dignity. Central Africa may then be counted on as the inheritance of Islam at no very distant date."

Sir Alan Burns, a famous British administrator in Africa, says much the same thing about inter-marriage. Writing on colour prejudice he testifies, "It has been stated that in the matter of discrimination Islam has a better record than Christianity, that it has destroyed race prejudice and national sentiments, abolished caste, ignored colour and broke down all barriers between man and man. What is of more importance is that it broke down the barriers between men and women of different races, the conquering Muslims mating with the women of all nations and giving their own daughters to Black Muslims."

A Christian missionary, W. Wilsoncash in his book, *The Expansion of Islam* corroborates the remarks made by Sir Wilfred Blunt. "Islam", he writes, "endows its people with a dignity peculiarly its own. Direct access to God makes one of the strong appeals of Islam... ...

The Muslim with all his sense of superiority has no race complex."

Just what this belief in spiritual and racial equality can mean to an African negro is beautifully described by Mr. Winwood Reade, a famous rationalist, in his book *The Martyrdom of Man*. After giving a detailed description of the miserable lives of African villagers before they adopted Islam he goes on to reconstruct "the great change" which has come about.

"Let us now suppose that a hundred years have passed and let us visit the village again. The place itself and the whole country around have been transformed. The forest has disappeared and in its stead are fields covered with the glossy blade of the young rice, with the tall retufted maize, with the millet and the guinea corn, with the yellow flowers of tobacco plant growing in wide fields and with large shrubberries of cotton, the snowy wool peeping forth from the impending leaves. Before us stands a great town flanked by towers and with heavy wooden gates. Day dawns and the women come forth to the brook decorously dressed in blue cotton robes passed over the hair as a hood. Men ride forth on horse-back wearing white turbans and swords suspended on their right shoulders by a crimson sash. They are the direct descendants of the forest savage, their faces are those of pure Negroes but the expression is not the same. Their manners are grave and composed; they salute one another saying in Arabic "Peace be with you". The palace house or town-hall is also the mosque; the parliamentary debates and the law trials which are held there have all the dignity

of a religious service. Though the villagers are not so picturesque, their inhabitants are happier and better men. Violent and dishonest deeds are no longer arranged by pecuniary compensations. Husbands can no longer set wife-traps for their friends; adultery is treated as a criminal offence. Men can no longer squander away their relations at the gaming table and stake their own bodies on a throw. Men can no longer be tempted to vice and crime under the influence of palm wine. Women can no longer be married by a great chief in herds and treated like beasts of burden and like slaves. Each wife has an equal part of her husband's love by law; it is not permitted to forsake and degrade the old wife for the sake of the young. Everybody is taught to read and write in Arabic. Here there is a remarkable change and one that deserves a place in history. The Muhammadan has already overspread a region of Negro-land as large as Europe. It is firmly established not only in the Africa of the Mediterranean and the Nile and in the oases of the Sahara but also throughout that part of the continent which we have termed the platform of the Niger."

Mr. E. W. Blydon states in plain terms why such a transformation has been possible:

"The progress of Islam in Africa has no doubt been materially advanced by this absence of any feeling of repulsion towards the Negro; indeed Islam seems never to have treated the Negro as an inferior, as has unhappily too often been the case in Christendom."

In his book, *Mahommedanism in Africa*, R. Bosworth Smith says:

"It is an admitted fact, on all hands, that Islam gives to its new Negro converts an energy, a dignity, a self-reliance, which is all too rarely found in their pagan or Christian fellow-countrymen".

Mr. D. G. Hogarth in his book *The Penetration of Arabia* (New York 1907) speaks of the similar effect of Islam with people of other countries and colours:

"Within a century after their rise these people (the Arabs) became the masters of an empire extending from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the confines of China, an empire greater than that of Rome at its zenith. In this period of unprecedented expansion *they assimilated to their creed, speech and even physical type, more aliens than any stock before or since*, not excepting the Hellenic, the Roman, the Anglo-Saxon or the Russians".

Philip Hitti considers that one of the many benefits derived from the Muslim institution of the *Haj* is that it ensures that Muslims of different races and colours mix annually.

"Down through the ages this institution has continued to serve as the major unifying influence in Islam and the most effective common bond among the diverse believers. It renders almost every capable Muslim perforce a traveller once in his life-time. The socialising influence of such a gathering of the brotherhood of believers from the four corners of the world is hard to over-estimate. It affords an opportunity for Negroes, Chinese, Persians, Syrians, Arabs, rich and poor, high and low, to fraternise and meet together on the common ground of faith. *Of all the religions of the world Islam seems to have attained the*

largest measure of success in demolishing the barriers of race, colour and nationality."*

To the list of nationalities above, Philip Hitti might well have added that of the people of the Philippines who have struggled there to keep Islam alive for many centuries and the Malayans and the Muslims of Indonesia. Indonesia, in particular, affords an excellent example of a multi racial society where Islam is constantly gaining ground.

The great Twentieth Century historian, Toynbee, regards the extinction of race consciousness between Muslims as one of the outstanding achievements of Islam. Toynbee writes:

"The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding achievements of Islam and in the contemporary world, there is as it happens a crying need for the propagation of the Islamic virtue; for although the record of history would seem on the whole to show that race consciousness has been the exception and not the rule in the constant inter-breeding of the human species, it is a fatality of the present situation that this consciousness is felt and felt strongly—by the very peoples, who, in the competition of the last four centuries between several warring powers have won, at least for the moment, the lion's share of the inheritance of the earth. Though in certain other respects, the triumph of the English-speaking peoples may be judged in retrospect, to have been a blessing to mankind, in this perilous matter of race feeling, it can hardly be denied that it has been a misfor-

*Hitti, "History of the Arabs," page 136

tune. The English-speaking nations that have established themselves in the New World overseas have not, on the whole, been "good mixers". They have mostly swept away their primitive predecessors and where they have either allowed a primitive population to survive, as in South Africa, or have imported primitive manpower from elsewhere, as in North America, they have developed the rudiments of that paralysing institution which in India—where in the course of many centuries it has grown to its full stature—we have learnt to deplore in the name of caste.

Moreover, the alternative to extermination or segregation has been exclusion—a policy which averts the danger of internal schism in the life of the community which practises it but does so at the price of producing a no less dangerous state of international tension between the included and the excluded races, especially when this policy is applied to representatives of alien races who are not primitive but civilised, like the Hindus, the Chinese and the Japanese. As things are now, the exponents of racial intolerance are in the ascendant and, if their attitude towards the race question prevails, it may eventually provoke a general catastrophe; yet the forces of social toleration, which at present seem to be fighting a losing battle in the spiritual struggle are of immense importance to mankind and might still regain the upper hand if any strong influence militating against race consciousness that has hitherto been kept in reserve—were now to be thrown into the scale.... It is conceivable that the spirit of Islam might be the timely reinforcement which would decide the issue in favour of toleration and peace."

Sir C. R. Reddy, Ph.D. an authority on Political Science and Philosophy writes in the May issue of the "Twentieth Century Magazine" published in London in 1943:

"The age-long problem of racial equality, *has not been solved by any system of religion or ethics except Muhammadanism.* Only amongst the Muhammadans do we find *all* the Faithful, whatever their race, or colour enjoying absolute prandial and matrimonial equality. In every other polity and religion.... reason, ethics and spiritual ideals have broken on the rock of race and colour."

To end this brief survey of the Islamic attitude to colour let us go back to the early days of Islam for one of those simple, straightforward anecdotes which help the teachings of Islam to crystallise in our minds. This story concerns the son of a Negress who was also half-brother to the great Caliph Harun-al-Rashid. In 819 A.C. this Negro, called Ebrahim, set himself up as Caliph of Baghdad but he was forgiven by his nephew al-Mamun and freely pardoned.

Ebrahim described his interview with the Caliph in the following words:

"Al-Mamun said to me on my meeting him after having been pardoned: "Is it thou who art Negro Khalifa? - to which I replied:—Amirul Momineen, I am he whom you have pardoned. It has been said by the slaves of Barin Hashas: When men extol their worth, the slave of the family of Hashas can make up by his verses the defect of birth and fortune. Though I be a slave, my soul, through its noble nature, is free; though my body is dark my mind is fair." To this al-Mamun replied: "Uncle,

a jest of mine has put you in a serious mood." He then recited these verses 'Blackness of skin cannot degrade an ingenious mind or lessen the worth of a scholar and wit. Let darkness claim the colour of your body. I claim as mine your fair and candid soul."

Those words, "Let darkness claim the colour of your body: I claim as mine your fair and candid soul" make a fitting conclusion to this section on the total absence of a colour bar under Islam.

ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY

The word democracy comes from the Greek word *demos* meaning "people" and is defined in Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary as, a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people collectively and is administered by them or by officers appointed by them." This means that, in a democratic state, all mentally sound adults have an equal right to express opinions on matters of government or, when direct government by the people becomes a numerical impossibility, to elect their own representatives to speak on their behalf.

The foundation of any democracy must rest on a basic belief in the equality of all people and in this section on Human Rights we have already seen how zealously Islam guards this principle. We have seen how justly the *dhimmies* and the *muhajreen* were treated from the very earliest days of Islam, how the rights of women were protected and how Islam encouraged the abolition of slavery. We have seen too, how the Holy Quran constantly reiterates the fact that all men are born equal in the sight of Allah. Given these factors it is impossible that any form of government could evolve except a democracy. Indeed Islam was the first religion to preach and practise democracy. Professor Briffault says:

"The ideals of freedom for all human beings, of human brotherhood, of the equality of all men before the law, of democratic government by consultation and universal

suffrage, the ideals that inspired the French Revolution and the Declaration of Rights, that guided the framing of the American Constitution and inflamed the struggle for independence in the Latin-American countries *were not inventions of the West. They find their ultimate inspiration and source in the Holy Quran.* They are the quintessence of what the intelligentsia of Mediaeval Europe acquired from Islam over a period of centuries through the various channels of Muslim Spain, Sicily, the Crusaders; and of the ideals propagated by the various societies that developed in Europe in the wake of the Crusades in imitation of the brotherhood associations of Islam...... It is highly probable that, but for the Arabs, modern European civilisation would never have arisen at all, it is absolutely certain that, but for them, it would never have assumed that character which has enabled it to transcend all previous phases of evolution."*

Another European Professor, Dr. Germanus, a Hungarian, insists that the basic principles of Islam were far in advance of anything yet achieved by modern democracy. Dr. Germanus says: "Islam as a religion, and as a social structure, has been built upon a truly democratic principle. It is the people who are addressed in the Quran, and it is for the benefit of the people and their salvation that all the injunctions of the rituals and beliefs are imposed on the believers. It is not a class privileged by descent or esoteric love which can rule over the oppressed and cowed *en masse* but every individual man and woman stands directly before God in

*Briffault. The Making of Humanity. Pages 190-92

worship, duty and right. Prayer is communicated directly from the heart of the believer and if it is done in congregation, the Imam is the one most learned and for his learning's sake most respected. *Modern democracy has not yet fully reached the basic principles of Islam.*"

In the passage quoted above Dr Germanus has put his finger on the fundamental difference between Islamic democracy and Western democracy. In Western democracy the religious element is lacking. Americans speak proudly of Government of the people by the people and for the people but under Islam, the form that democracy takes has to be expressed as the Government of Allah and by Allah but through and for His people. Under Islam the sovereignty must always rest, ultimately, not in the people but in Allah.

Islam and Theocracy

Islamic Democracy is never a Theocracy. Since Islam does not encourage priesthood, Theocracy cannot flourish in Muslim Society. To quote Professor Germanus again,

"*Islam has never suffered from the shackles of a centralised church or a professional clergy.* Islam recognises no ruling sect, tolerates no single despotic claimant to Allah's Regency on earth—Power can be vested only in the people, the *umma*, the whole spiritual community."

The moral principle inherent in Islam is really a manifestation of the way in which Divine Revelation is inextricably interwoven with the daily life of every Muslim. In the West, democracy originated as an attempt to regenerate European society in the economic sphere but, under Islam, the democratic idea did not grow out of want or out of the

fear of anarchy, it was not conceived merely as an extension of economic opportunity, but it was the natural, physical expression of a deep spiritual belief, an attempt to translate into secular terms the spiritual *tauhid* while at the same time never divorcing secular government from the spiritual ideals inherent in Islam. It is a *secular* form of government based on the *spiritual equality* of men, a combination unique in the history of political theory and one which safeguards men against all the more extreme and violent forms of government.

Individual Responsibility Inherent in Islam

From the age of six years onward a Muslim learns that he is directly responsible for the good and the bad deeds that he may do and that his salvation lies in his own hands. The Holy Quran, the *Shariat* and the Traditions are there for his guidance, in secular as well as in spiritual matters, but the responsibility for seeking that guidance must always rest with him. No priesthood stands between a Muslim and Allah, he himself is held to be in direct, personal and free communication with his God. Islam looks upon this sense of personal responsibility as the essential quality which differentiates a man from the other creatures of Allah, and the Quran constantly urges Muslims to develop their natural powers to the fullest extent, the better to cultivate this sense of responsibility. An Arabic saying is, "He who has understood himself has understood Allah" and according to Islam everything that promotes the growth of personality towards its natural purpose is good and worth acquiring.

On the other hand, egotism is not encouraged by Islam. Only what is also beneficial to mankind is worth the effort of development. The purely selfish is evil and to be shunned --"For it is only that which is of use to mankind remains" Al Quran (13:71). And again, "You cannot attain righteousness unless you spend for the benefit of others out of what you love to possess". Also, "your neighbour has a claim on you." At no time, and in no way, may a good Muslim think of himself in isolation from the Islamic fraternity.

Collective Responsibility under Islam

From the outset a Muslim knows himself primarily as a member of a community, a spiritual family. Here again we find a Hadis which runs thus : -

"All creation is the family of Allah and of all creation the most beloved of Allah is he who does most good to his family." *

Here we see how by first fostering the sense of individual responsibility it became immediately possible for Islam to move on to a sense of collective responsibility. As the great Nineteenth Century statesman, Charles Sumner, said, "The true greatness of a nation is in those qualities which constitute the greatness of an individual". Under Islam each Muslim is responsible to Allah and learns through that responsibility to be responsible also to each and every Muslim. His early recognition of himself as an individual with individual rights is at once his guide as to how to live in the community and *his safeguard against losing his individual rights and responsibilities.* The whole foundation of self-government is based on this sense of

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*Mishkat Sharif, Hadis No. 4754.

responsibility to himself, to his community and to Allah. It is possible that, at times, the needs of the community may over-ride his individual needs and wishes but never conceivable that the might of the community could override the wishes of Allah.

Ideally, under Islam, there can be *no party politics* as the needs of the *millat* or nation should always over-ride the clamours of different factions. On this point the Holy Quran is explicit:

"But mankind have broken their principles among them into sections (parties) each party rejoicing in its tenets. So leave them for a while." (Quran 23:53-54).

On the other hand, a system such as the Communist regime is equally impossible under Islam which could never countenance the loss of an individual's separate personality and its submergence in a collective "mass society". Islam envisages on a literate and intelligent society capable of voting freely, and without being canvassed, coerced or persuaded, for what it believes to be morally right and just. Such a system cannot tolerate any form of despotic rule.

Islam and Despotism

There have been despots ruling in the name of Islam but such tyranny is against all the fundamental precepts of the creed that they thus abused. Islam recognised no such principle as "the divine right of kings", no leader may claim for himself any supererogatary powers, no Islamic sovereign may consider himself above the law.

Abu Bakr, the first Khalifa, sought always to show the people that he was no more powerful than they were,

even to the extent of continuing to milk the goats for a young woman who thought he might consider himself above such mundane tasks after his election as Khalifa.

In the historic speech made immediately after his election Abu Bakr said:

"Now I have been elected your Khalifa, although I am no better than you. Co-operate if I am right, set me right if I go astray. Truth is a trust; falsehood is a treason. The weak man among you shall be strong with me till his right has been vindicated, and the strong man among you shall be weak with me till I have taken what is due from him. Obey me as long as I obey Allah and His Prophet. *When I disobey Allah and His Prophet, disobey me.*"

From the reign of Hazrat Omar come many examples of the Islamic conception of the ruler as the servant of the people. On a previous page in this section we have seen how he rebuked a Judge for wishing to give up his seat to the Khalifa, a demonstration to the people listening in the court house that they must never consider their ruler as above the law.

The conception and shape of Islamic democracy was beautifully expressed by Hazrat Omar as follows:

"Without consultation with common people or their chosen representatives there can be no Khilafat".

Hazrat Omar always considered himself as the guide of the common people, never as their ruler, least of all as their dictator. In his first address to the people, after he had been made Khalifa, he said

"I compare the Arab to a camel who has the good sense to obey his driver. The duty of the driver is to see that

he is leading on the right path. I assure you on oath that I shall lead you on the right path." On another occasion Hazrat Omar made his position clear to the people in these historic words: "I deserve as much from the public treasury as is permissible to the guardian of an orphan. If I happened to possess wealth, I would get nothing. I would be entitled to bare sustenance allowance." He also said, "I owe you a number of obligations. I call upon you to demand of me their fulfilment. One of my obligations is that I should add nothing to the public treasury by unjust or unfair means and that I should spend nothing from the public fund unnecessarily and excessively and exorbitantly. Another obligation of mine is that I should increase your standard of living by increasing your stipends. Yet another obligation is that I should collectively defend your borders, your lives and property against all enemies and foes. I shall compel you to lend me your support and collaboration, in carrying out the responsibilities and obligations placed on me, by you." On still another occasion he said, "My position among *you is no more than that of common man.* I strongly hate the idea that you should obey my arbitrary whims and caprices".

The Fourth Khalifa of Islam, Hazrat Ali, when fatally wounded by an assassin, remained true to the same democratic principles as his predecessors. In his *Khilafat*, William Muir writes:

"They, (the people) asked the Khalifa whether, if he died, it was his will that his son should succeed to the throne. So, true to the elective principle Ali answered— I do not command it."

When Sultan Salahuddin lay dying he sought to impress on his heir the teachings of Islam in these inspiring words.

"My son, I commend thee to the most High Allah, the fountain of all goodness. Do His Will, for that way lies peace. Abstain from the shedding of blood trust not to that for blood that is spilt never slumbers. Seek to win the hearts of the people and watch over their prosperity, for it is to secure their happiness that thou art appointed by Allah and by me. Try to gain the hearts of thy Amirs and ministers and nobles. I have become great as I am because I have striven to win men's hearts by gentleness and kindness."

An early Muslim ambassador to the Byzantine court, Ma'az bin Jabal expressed the democratic ideal of Islam in these words, "Our Khalifa is one of us. We shall accept him as Khalifa so long he follows our Book and keeps to the way of our Prophet. Otherwise we shall remove him. If he should commit theft we should cut off his hand. If he commits adultery, we shall stone him to death. If he should rebuke anybody he should be rebuked, if he should injure anybody he should have to pay for it. His position is like any other from amongst us."

The Holy Prophet himself made it clear that no leader could ever command obedience merely for obedience sake. On one occasion a military leader is said to have ordered a fire to be lit and then to have told his men to throw themselves on the fire in order to test their discipline, forbidding them to do so only at the last moment. When the Holy Prophet heard of this he said, indignantly, "*No obedience is due to a leader in any matter which is repugnant to Allah.*"

According to the great Muslim historian and philosopher Ibn Khaldun—and he was also the first sociologist—, a ruler is in the first instance the symbolic expression of the group mind. To this ruler a habitual obedience may develop and he then comes to be considered as the spiritual and secular overlord of the people. After a time a royal house may succeed in ruling by force *but only when the people lose all group sense.*

It is therefore incumbent upon all Muslims to keep alive the sense of belonging to a community for that is their greatest safeguard against despotic rule. It also behoves them to choose their leaders wisely.

Choosing a Leader under Islam

The Traditions of the Prophet constantly refer to the need to choose a leader whenever a number of Muslims are engaged in work of importance and, by extension of this theory, the Traditions recognise the need to elect a leader for a community on a national scale.

From this it becomes obvious that the people must next learn how to judge the qualifications of men fit for leadership and it is to this end that the Holy Quran constantly urges Muslims first to acquire knowledge and wisdom and then to reflect. In an Islamic State a good citizen must be a man, or woman, of mature judgment as will appear from the following verses of the Holy Quran:

"Thus do We explain the revelation *for the people who reflect.*" (10:24).

"Thus We detail the revelation *for the people who have understanding* (30:28).

"We have detailed one revelation *for the people who can judge*". (6:98)

"But only the *people of understanding* heed". (3:7).

"Allah commands you", the Holy Quran says also, "*that you entrust political authority to those who are best capable of discharging this trust* and that when you are called upon to judge between the people you judge with justice and equity."

The Holy Quran also urges Muslims to use the method of consultation:

"Those who answer the call of their Lord and establish prayer and *whose affairs are a matter of counsel.*" (42:38). and:

"And consult with them upon the conduct of affairs". (3 : 159)

The Holy Prophet was himself advised to use the method of consultation in the following words from the Holy Quran:

"It is by the Great Mercy of Allah that thou (the Prophet) art kind towards them, and if thou hadst been rough and hard-hearted they would surely have dispersed from around thee. So forbear and ask forgiveness *and consult them in matters of administration*; and when thou hast determined the matter thou put thy trust on Allah. Surely Allah loves those who put trust in Him." (Quran 3 : 159).

Mutual consultation and advice are again described in the Quran as a characteristic of a true Muslim, in the following verse:

"Those who hearken to Their Lord and observe prayer *and whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation* and who spend out of whatsoever We have provided for them." (Al-Quran 42:38).

The ideal leader of an Islamic community is therefore seen to be one elected by citizens of mature judgment who will consult with those sane citizens on democratic lines. That leader will see himself, not as a despot, but as a trustee, a temporary custodian of a power that belongs to Allah and which Allah has vested in the whole Islamic community. Allah alone is the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe and to Allah the leader must always be willing to submit, to dedicate and, should the need arise, surrender his temporary power. In short the good leader will also be the good Muslim.

Public Servants under Islam

In the matter of other public servants such as governors and administrators the same principles obtain. These principles were summed up most effectively in the early days of Islam by the Holy Prophet in conversation with the first Khalifa, Abu Bakr. A reliable Tradition of the Holy Prophet says:

"It is reported that Hazrat Abu Bakr enquired of the Holy Prophet of the principles of Islam in making appointments in high posts of public trust. The Holy Prophet replied, "They (these high posts) are for those who do not aspire for them and not for those who are greedy after them; they are for those who run away from them and not for those who scramble for them; they are for those to whom they are offered (without asking) and not for those who claim them as their rights." (Vide Subh-ul-A'sha).

In brief, public service is to be looked on as something undertaken for the good of the community and without thought of self-advancement.

Prayer as a great democratic force

The Holy Quran insists repeatedly that all Muslims are equal. In the ritual of the five daily prayers that equality becomes a living reality and a great democratic force.

Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, a Hindu, writing in the *Eastern Times* of the 22nd of December 1944, acknowledges the power of the daily prayers as follows.

"What does Islam stand for? In my opinion all right-thinking men must recognise Islam *as the one and only truly democratic faith that is actually functioning in the world of to-day*. Being a Hindu, firmly entrenched in the Hindu faith, I yet make bold to say so. My own religion has not succeeded, despite its fundamental philosophy, in putting into practice its theories about the oneness of humanity. No other religion, whatever its theory may be, has demonstrated, as Islam has done, the fact that the essential idea of the oneness of man before God and before man is a practical proposition that can be made to work in every day life. Whether you contemplate a religious observance or the prayers in the mosque or a formal or solemn partaking of food in common the lowest is equal to the highest in Islam, the beggar in tattered rags gives the call for the prayer and the Sultan follows."

Miss Sarojini Naidu, a Hindu lady makes the same point about the democracy of prayer.

"Islam was the first religion that preached and practised democracy, for in the mosque when the Azan is sounded and the worshippers are gathered together, *the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day*. When the peasant

and the king kneel side by side, and proclaim that God Alone is Great. I have been struck over and over again by this individual unity of Islam that makes a man instinctively a brother."

Finally let us take a European point of view. In the book *Emotion as the Basis of Civilisation* we find the eminent European writer, G. D. Denison saying:

"The great difficulty of creating any sense of unity or solidarity in such a group which is composed of different nations with different tradition and outlook is apparent. All historians declare that the amazing success of Islam in dominating the world is the outstanding coherence of sense of unity in the group, but they do not explain how this miracle was worked out by Islam. There can be no doubt that the most effective instrument was prayer. The five daily prayers when all the faithful wherever they were, alone in the solitude of the desert or in the noisy assemblies of crowded cities, performed their ablution and prostrated themselves towards Mecca uttering the same words of adoration for true God, loyalty to His Prophet, produced an overwhelming effect even on the spectators and the psychological effect of that fusing of the minds of the worshippers in a common adoration and expression of loyalty is truly stupendous. Muhammad was the first to see the stupendous power of public prayer as a unification of culture and there can be little doubt that the power of Islam is due to a larger measure to the obedience of the faithful to this unenviable rule of daily five prayers."

The Evolution of Islamic Democracy in Africa

To-day, in Africa, we can trace the sudden rise of Islamic civilisation in a new community and see how,

inevitably, with the growth of Islam there comes a corresponding growth of democratic principles. In his book *Muhammadans in Africa*, Mr Bosworth Smith writes:

"The worst evils, which there is reason to believe prevailed at one time over the whole of Africa and which are still to be found in many parts of Africa and those not far from Gold Coast and from our own settlements—cannibalism and human sacrifice and the burial of living infants disappear at once and for ever at the advent of Islam. Natives who hitherto lived in a state of nakedness or nearly so, begin to dress and that neatly; natives who never washed before begin to wash and that frequently, for ablutions for prayer (Namaz) are commanded in the Quran. *The tribal organisation tends to give place to something which has a wider basis; in other words tribes coalesce into nations*, and with the increase of energy and intelligence, nations into empires. Many such instances could be adduced from the history of the Sudan and adjoining countries during the last hundred years. War is better organised and is under some form of restraint—quarrels are not picked for nothing. There is less indiscriminate plundering and greater security for property and life. Elementary schools spring up. The well-built and neatly kept mosque with its call to prayer repeated five times a day, its Mecca-pointing niche, its Imam, its weekly service becomes the centre of the village, instead of the ghastly fetish or Jujuhouse. The worship of one God, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient and Compassionate, is an immesasureable advance upon anything which the natives have been taught to worship before.

The Arabic language in which the Muslim scriptures are always written is a language of extraordinary copiousness and beauty; once learned, it becomes a lingua franca to the tribes of half the continent and serves as an introduction to literature or it is a literature itself. It substitutes moreover a written code of law for the arbitrary caprice of a Chieftain—a change which is in itself an immense advance in civilisation. Manufacture and commerce spring up, not the dumb trading or the elementary bartering of raw products which we know from Herodotus to have existed from the earliest times in Africa, nor cowrie shells or gunpowder or tobacco or rum, which still serve as the chief medium of exchange all along the coast, but manufactures involving considerable skill and a commerce which is elaborately organised; under their influence and that of the more settled Government which Islam brings in its train, there have arisen great cities. This is consistent with Islam and Islam encourages it. It is an admitted fact that Islam gives to its New negro converts an energy, dignity, a self-reliance and a self-respect that is all too rarely found in his pagan or Christian fellows."

In another passage in his book Mr. Bosworth Smith speaks of the way in which earlier Perso-Arabian settlers brought with them the same spirit of Islamic democracy:

"In eastern Africa, as indeed elsewhere, it has always been one of the greatest attributes of Islam that it has encouraged all men, without distinction, to cultivate and express their minds, to reveal the flowers of thought and these treasured concepts enwrapt in their souls; nor was the liberty of speech confined to the poetic vein which

produced upon this coast romantic and heroic verse of great vigour and grace, religious and homelitic work inspired by the soul-felt piety and faith. Every man, Sultan or slave, was encouraged to speak out his mind upon all matters of public policy, to expound for all to hear the rights which he felt were the just due of his community and to denounce the wrongs from which he felt they suffered. *The literature of this period reflects in a striking manner the free and democratic spirit of the people, their love of their adopted land, their hatred of oppression, their determination to preserve their freedom against all.* This ingrained spirit of liberty, love of intellectual freedom and right of free speech have been the treasured privilege of the Islamic social system, throughout East Africa."

The Holy Quran and the Constitution

The Holy Quran has laid down the principles of an Islamic constitution without specifically going into detail. These principles may be summarised as follows:

(1) The ultimate sovereignty rests with Allah Who is All-Hearing and All-Seeing.

(2) The sovereignty of Allah is vested not in any one person but in the whole spiritual community, each Muslim having equal rights and powers.

(3) Franchise is a sacred trust from Allah and it is the duty of every Muslim to use his vote wisely and after careful thought—so that he may be represented by the most righteous and able of his brethren and led by a wise and dedicated ruler.

(4) All administrative and judicial offices are, like those of the leaders, in the nature of a sacred

trust and must be accepted and discharged in the spirit of that trust.

(5) Party politics must be subordinated to the general good of the nation.

(6) The method of consultation is to be preferred above all other methods of government.

A State founded on Religion rather than blood

Philip Hitti gives an admirable summary of the way in which Islamic democracy came into being:

"This Islamic society or the commonwealth which the Prophet (of Islam) set up" he writes, "was based on perfect equality and justice for all with divine sovereignty as its cardinal principle." This commonwealth, based as it was on Divine sovereignty, was free from the vices and corruptions peculiar to the monarchy or republic based on the concept of popular sovereignty. The law in that State was not the expression of the general will of the community as Rousseau propounded, nor was it an expression of the arbitrary will of a despotic ruler, but it was the expression of the infallible Divine Will. Therefore these laws were decidedly perfect and conducive to the general well-being of humanity. .... A remarkable feature of this nation (Islamic nation) was its religious and ideological unity instead of racial or tribal unity which hitherto had been the uniting bond of the Arabs. This was the first attempt in the history of Arabia at a social organisation with religion rather than blood as its basis."*

The Clarion Call of Islam

Kazi Nazrul Islam has expressed the Muslim feeling for equality and democracy in stirring verse:

* Vid P. K. Hitti. History of the Arabs, P. 120-22.

The clarion call of Islam goes round the world
There is no great or small, all men are equal.
There is no slave or master, ruler, or ruled,
Islam declares we all stand each for the other,
Both joy and sorrow shall we equally share,
No one shall hoard the good things of the world.
And yet, behold, tears burn the eyes of some,
While other illumine their eyes with chandeliers,
Shall a handful roll in wealth while masses starve?
This surely never was or is Islam.

(Kazi Nazrul Islam.)

ISLAM AND INTERNATIONALISM

There are, to-day, a number of independent Muslim countries, sovereign states with their own national interests. Each of these states, however, is also part of a greater unit than the nation, for all Muslims, whatever their nationality may be, are also part of the international fraternity of Islam. The Holy Quran insists throughout on this concept of supra-national brotherhood.

The spirit of internationalism is inherent in Islam because it is the natural extension of the Muslim belief that all Muslims are equal members of the spiritual and secular community. Islam goes further than that, however, because all Muslims are also taught that all men are created equal in the sight of Allah, irrespective of their race or religious beliefs. The Holy Quran therefore insists on the most complete tolerance of the customs and creeds of other races, which means that not only is there a limited form of internationalism, as between one Muslim country and another, but also can all inclusive internationalism which embraces every country of the world. In fact the Holy Quran anticipated the ideals of the United Nations by some thirteen hundred years.

Let us first study the growth of the Islamic fraternity and then go on to the wider field of international relationships.

The Islamic Fraternity

The basis of the Islamic fraternity was laid down by the Holy Prophet himself in his last address, delivered on the

8th of Zul Hajj (7th March 632 A.C.). Here are his words:

"Ye people, listen to my words, your lives and your property are sacred and inviolable among one another until you appear before your Allah..... .. You people listen to my word and understand the same. *Know that All Muslims are brothers unto one another. You are one brotherhood, nothing which belongs to another is lawful unto his brother unless freely given out of his goodwill.* Guard yourself from committing injustice The aristocracy of the old time is trampled under my feet. The Arab has no superiority over the non-Arab. And a non-Arab has no superiority over the Arab. All are children of Adam and Adam was made of the dust of the earth."

In this speech the Holy Prophet was embodying a great many sayings of the Holy Quran on the subject of Islamic unity, such as, for example:

"All Muslims are brothers unto one another and hold fast the convenant of Allah unitedly and be not disunited."

The idea of Islamic unity as being something above merely national loyalties is expressed in the Quran thus

"Lo, this is your *Ummat* (Ideological Group of Followers) the *ONE UMMAT*, and I am your Lord *so obey Me only.*" (21:92).

And again in these noble words:

"O mankind, Lo, surely, We have created you of a male and female and made you tribes and families (so) *that you may know* one another (but) Lo, surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you the most careful (of duty) and best in conduct. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, Aware. (49:13).

The Quran also says:

"And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited. And remember Allah's favour to you When you were enemies, then He united your hearts, so by His favour you became brethren. And when you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes clear to you His Message so that you may be guided." (Quran 3:103).

"And the believers, men and women, are friends one of the other. They enjoin good and forbid evil, and keep up prayers, and pay the poor rate and obey Allah and His Messenger. As for them Allah will have mercy on them. Surely Allah is Mighty and Wise." (Quran 9:71).

Western and Hindu Testimony to the Reality of Islamic Brotherhood

Many European writers have acknowledged the reality and strength of the Islamic fraternity. Major A. C. Leonard in an essay entitled *Islam—Her Moral and Spiritual Value* writes:

"There is a true and real brotherhood in Islam which contrasts very favourably with the professed brotherhood of Christianity."

The Reverend Murray Titus remarks:

"Islamic brotherhood is a social and spiritual fact. Islam is not only a faith, it is a right, it is a legal system and social system also. Islam does possess a brotherhood which is a unifying factor, amid the clashes of colour, race, class and nationality."

Radhakrishan, a former President of the Upper House of India, allies himself with many Western writers in his praise of Islamic brotherhood. In an essay written in 1933 and called *East and West in Religion*, he says:

"We cannot deny that the conception of brotherhood in Islam transcends all barriers of race and nationality—a feature which does not characterise any other religion".

The great writer Sir Thomas Arnold sees the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca as the supreme translation of this concept into practical fact.

"Islam", writes Sir Thomas, "ordains a yearly gathering of believers of all nations and languages brought from all parts of the world to pray in the sacred place towards which their faces are set in every hour of their prayer in their distant homes and mosques. No touch of religious genius could have conceived a better expedient for impressing on the mind of the faithful a sense of their common life and of their common brotherhood in the bond of their faith. Here in a supreme act of common prayer, the Negro of the West coast of Africa meets the Chinaman from the distant East; the courtly and polished Ottoman recognising his brother Muslim in the wild islander from the farthest end of the Malayan sea. At the same time, throughout the whole Islamic world the hearts of the believers are lifted up in sympathy with their more fortunate brethren gathered together in the sacred city of Mecca as in their own homes; they celebrate the festival of Idul-Azha. Whatever be the race, colour, rank or antecedents of the worshipper, he is received into the brotherhood of the believer and takes his place as an equal among equals.

Islam is a great political power, whose effect, the world will feel more and more in proportion as the ends of the earth are brought closer and closer together. *Islam is the only solution for all the ills of the world.* This is no idle boast on my part. Every thoughtful observer of what is going on in Western Asia and in Africa can appreciate this truth. For it is in Islam only that the idea of a real material League of Nations has been approached in the right and practicable way."

Mr. H. G. Wells records:

"The stress Islam lays on equality of all men without any distinction of creed and class and the practical domestic brotherhood of Muslim has made the faith one of the greatest forces of the civilized world today."

"Islam" says Mark Sykes "is compact, yet international, and whilst strongly united by bonds of simple ceremonials and simpler dogmas. Even now, a Moor is more at home in Shiraz than a Spaniard in Berlin or a Rumanian in Vienna. Although there are many Germans and few Afghans in Cairo, yet the Afghan is less of a stranger within the gates of Al-Azhar than is the waiter of Jambunuo in the Soho lodging-house."

Islam and the United Nations

From the idea of a spiritual brotherhood to that of a universal brotherhood, or United Nations, is only a short step both intellectually and emotionally: but it is a step of the greatest possible importance to the progress of civilisation. As the great historian Toynbee said, in Chicago in 1954, "Mankind must become a family or destroy itself .... the key to survival is the growth of

human consciousness of a world community....nationalism can lead to the annihilation of the world to-day." These great truths, which the western mind is still finding it difficult to grasp, were accepted by every true Muslim over thirteen hundred years ago.

It is related in Trimizi by Abu Daud that the Holy Prophet once asked his followers "Do you know what is better than prayer, fasting, and charity?" They requested to tell them what is that thing. The Holy Prophet said "*It is keeping peace and good relations between men and men as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind.*"

"Keeping peace and good relations between men" is surely the primary purpose of the United Nations to-day. The Holy Quran seems also to suggest the use of supervisory force to fulfil the purposes of peace.

Says the Quran:

"And if the two parties of believers fall to fighting then make peace between them. And if one party of them doeth wrong to the other (i e., aggressor) then fight ye that which doeth wrong (the aggressor) till it return to the Ordinance of Allah; then, if it return, make peace between them justly, and act equitably. Lo! Allah loveth the equitable. The believers are naught else than brothers. Then make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to Allah. (49:9-10).

Here again the emphasis is strongly on Peace and Negotiation.

The Holy Quran also urges mediation and moderation:

"We have thus made you a moderating nation in order that you should be an example to mankind."

As soon as he migrated to Madinah the Holy Prophet concluded a pact with the Jews and other non-Muslim tribes to form a federation of all communities inhabiting that part of the world. In this pact he laid down the following provisions:

(1) All communities, Muslims and non-Muslims, would share a common responsibility of defending Al-Madinah.

(2) All shall have freedom to follow and practise their own religion freely and openly.

(3) The oppressed would be protected

(4) Bloodshed, killing and violence would be prohibited.

(5) All shall enjoy freedom of life and property and all communities shall help each other in a common defence and in the common good.

Here, surely, we have the prototype of the Charter of the League of Nations.

In 1926 Professor Snouck Hurgronje in his thesis, *The Muslim World To-day* recognised that truth.

"The ideal of a league of human races", he wrote has indeed already been approached by Islam for the League of Nations was founded on this basis." *Islam takes the principle of equality of human races so seriously as to put other communities to shame.*"

The world of to-day certainly needs a world-wide community in which there will be no distinction between man and man, irrespective of creed, race and colour;

in which the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the weak and the strong will enjoy equal rights and privileges, in which there will be accord and peace and amity among all men and no-one shall transgress the rights of others. Islam has long pointed the way.

Professor Raphael Lamkin, the international lawyer who drafted the resolutions for the United Nations convention on Genocide fully endorses this statement. In an article reprinted in the *Chittagong Examiner* in 1956 Professor Lamkin says how he had been inspired by the sufferings of Muslim men and women at many stages of history and particularly by the destruction of Muslim Spain in the Twelfth Century and the terrible destruction of 1947 at the time of the Partition of the Sub-continent. Speaking of the world in general the Professor said that "some twenty million people have been destroyed by genocide during the past forty years." Referring to the actual terms of the convention he said:

"For the Muslims I would add that the convention which I drafted is in full accord with the Quran which embodies the most tolerant and international minded religion known to man. The acceptance of the Prophets of Judaism, Christianity and the prohibition of the desecration of other people's temples are illustrations of humane and tolerant spirit of this faith (Islam)."

Islam and International Law

Before Islam there was no really *international* law. The Indian laws of peace and war, enunciated in the *Kautilya* and *Manu* were applicable only to the Indian people, and those of Greece and Rome were confined to the people

living in territories conquered by those powers. Indeed it was not until 1856, just one hundred years ago, when European international law recognised Japan and Turkey, that the West showed itself prepared to treat with non-Christian nations. Islam, on the other hand, had showed itself ready from its very inception to recognise the rights of non-Muslim peoples. Islam is still alone in recognising the rights of all nations, for unlike Western international law it does not seek to distinguish between civilised and uncivilised nations.

Professor Walker in his "History of the Law of Nations" points out that early Arabic works on International Law were eagerly studied at the Universities of Europe during the Middle Ages, many of the Roman Catholic Popes, as well as the Protestant Luther, being keen students of Arabic. The books of *Jura Belli* (the laws of war) by Ayala, Victoria, Gentiles and Grotius were all based on the works of Semitic Arabs on *Jehad* and *Siyar* and had no counterpart in the institutions of Greece and Rome. International law was yet another product of that Renaissance which was provoked by the impact of Islam on Christendom and which flowered in Muslim Spain.

To find the foundations of Arab International Law one does not need, however, to look as late as Muslim Spain. Once again the Holy Quran will be found to embody all the basic principles in use to-day. The Quran warns:

"O Believers, why do you declare any thing which you do not (mean to) put into practice? Allah disapproves it very much that you should assert something but not practise it." (Quran 61:2-3).

Sanctity of Pledges

The basis of all international law must be the sanctity of pledges and treaties and on this point the Quran could not give clearer guidance. The Holy Quran says:

"Fulfil the covenant of Allah when you entered into it and do not break your oath (pledge) after you have confirmed them and made Allah your surety. Allah knows every act you do. (By breaking pledge) you should not behave like the woman who weaves threads with great labour and then herself cuts them into pieces. Do you take oaths (pledges) to deceive each other in your dealings so that one nation may get more worldly gains than the other Allah puts you to trial by means of these pledges and treaties. O, Muslims, do not use your pledges as a means of deception between yourselves." (16:91-92).

Right of Self-Defence

The Quran is also explicit about the rights of a nation to defend itself by force, a point much under discussion in the United Nations in November 1956. The Quran says:

"Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but do not transgress Lo, Allah does not love transgressors." (Quran 2.190). The Holy Prophet has also said, "Whoever fights in defence of his person and is killed, he is a martyr, whoever fights in defence of his family and is killed is a martyr, whoever fights in defence of his property and is killed for the cause of Allah is a martyr."

At no point, on the other hand, does the Holy Quran incite Muslims to take the offensive.

Rights of Envoys

The Muslims were also early to recognise the rights of the ambassadors and emissaries of other powers. All their retinue were to enjoy full personal immunity, were never to be killed, maltreated or molested in any way. Even if such an envoy conspired against the State to which he had been posted these privileges still remained his. The treatment of the envoys of the false Prophet and Impostor is a case in point. To them Muhammad said, "Had you not been envoys, I would have ordered you to be killed".

Rules for Foreign Policy

The main principles of the Foreign Policy to be pursued by an Islamic State are laid down by the Quran and the Sunnah on the following lines:

(1) An Islamic State must not seek to deceive other States, nor must it undertake obligations which it does not mean to fulfil.

(2) It must not break its plighted faith.

(3) It must not make unprovoked attacks upon its neighbours.

(4) It must not encourage conspiracies and stir up rebellion in other countries for its own advantage.

(5) It must not support and encourage the government of another State in its acts of oppression and cruelty.

(6) It ought not, when it has vanquished an enemy, to inflict humiliating injuries in gratification of its own revengeful passion. Vindictiveness, odious

in an individual man, is bad policy in a State for it prolongs exasperation, and sows the seeds of future troubles.

Western Nationalism must Yield to Internationalism

There has been no lack of Western thinkers anxious to see the forces of internationalism take over from the old nationalistic ways of living and thinking.

A socialist thinker, W[illegible] Brend wrote in 1944.

"The so-called (Western) nationalism is at the root of all wars, therefore the very idea and conception of nationalism has to be purged into a true World Brotherhood (as contemplated by Islam). The world body politic is cut to pieces by this very nationalism. "What a tragedy!" Fredrick Hertz, a German writer remarks– "The greatest obstacle in the path of human brotherhood is passion for Nationalism or so-called patriotism which lock up people in watertight compartments like so many jails." George A. Dasey and Fred Hertz in their book *Foundations of Human Conflicts* remark "I am proud of my American heritage but I am still more proud of my being a man since I am convinced that today our nationalism is enemy No. 1 of humanity and the most dangerous block in the path of progress and civilisation."

Islam the First League of Nations

It is, to quote Sir Thomas Arnold once more, "In Islam only that idea of a real, material League of Nations has been approached in the right and practicable way."

The great poet of Islam, Iqbal, explains how Islam has once again reconciled the practical and the spiritual, and in such a way as could make the ideal of the League of Nations an actuality.

It seems to me that God is bringing to us the truth that Islam is neither nationalism nor imperialism but "League of Nations" which recognises artificial boundaries and racial distinctions for facility of reference only and not for restricting the social horizon of its members. With Islam the ideal and the real are not two opposing forces which cannot be reconciled. The life of the ideal consists not in a total breach with the real which would tend to shatter the organic wholeness of life into painful oppositions but in the perpetual endeavour of the ideal to appropriate the real with a view eventually to absorb it, to convert it into itself and to illuminate its whole thing. Islam recognising the contact of the ideal with the real says "Yes, to the world of matter and points the way to master it with a view to discover a basis for a realistic regulation of life."

The spiritual basis of Islam can be a source of hope to all the world for what is internationalism but charity on a world-wide scale. And what, under Islam, is more charitable than "keeping peace between men and men."

Dr. R. R. Marett sums up the immensity of this concept in the following words:

"Real progress is progress in charity, all other advances being secondary thereto. In Islam charity does not mean mere giving of alms to a poor man and the needy. Its scope and meaning is all-embracing and all-comprehensive. The Holy Prophet of Islam has said, "Every good act is charity. Your smiling in your brother's face is charity, an exhortation to your fellowmen to virtuous deeds is equal to almsgiving; your putting a wanderer in the right

road is charity; your assisting the blind is charity; your removing stones and thorns and other obstructions from the road is charity; your giving water to the thirsty is charity. A man's true wealth hereafter is the good he does in this world to his fellowmen. When he dies the people will say, 'What property has he left behind?' But the angels will ask, "What good deeds has he sent before'?"

Herein is embodied a cosmopolitan concept.

PART III

REGENERATION

Islam as a Vitalising Power

Islam gave the world, as the reader has seen in the previous section, its first Charter of Human Rights; it also formulated the high principles underlying the United Nations Organisation of to-day, some thirteen hundred years before the Western powers attempted to put them into practice. To-day there is a great up-surging of nationalist feeling among many of the Muslim peoples and a sense of renewed power and destiny. If that new power can be informed and vitalised by a new spiritual awareness of Islam the result could be of the strongest possible influence for the good of mankind.

In an article on "The Future of Civilisation", re-published in "Dawn" on July 17th, 1955, Mr. R. C. Mowat noted that the Arabic peoples were entering on a new and dynamic phase in their civilisation and analysed the possible consequences. Mr. Mowat, who is Senior Lecturer in History at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, wrote as follows:

"Civilization has not of course progressed steadily at a constant rate. While some areas have forged ahead, others have remained static; the static areas have begun to advance while the formerly dynamic peoples have become sunk in torpor. An obvious example is the brilliant Muslim civilization that developed in the Middle East and North Africa when Western Europe was in barbarism; but having

roused the West to dynamic energy, the civilization of the Middle East (Muslim civilization) became static. *Now there are signs that once more the civilizations of Asia are entering into a dynamic phase, while Africa after a brusque awakening is taking her place in the rapid evolution of the ages.*" Mr. Mowat goes on to explain that spiritual forces are potent factors in the revitalization of any civilization. "It follows", he says, "that on examining the contemporary scene for signs of transition to a new order, it is not enough to focus on the *technical discoveries* or political revolution of our age. For the historian the manifestations of spiritual forces must have a special significance expressed in certain well marked ideologies such as underlay the first civilization in history and have nurtured all those that came after; such ideological forces are bound to play a predominant part in moulding the world order of the future. We are faced today with three possibilities -(1) the renewed outbreak of internal war, (2) a long drawn decline marked by the establishment of one or more totalitarian empires of a bureaucratic or materialistic type or (3) a transition to an entirely new type of world society based on a moral and spiritual ideology.... We may assume that moral and spiritual forces will play all-important part in this development and that they will provide the inspiration and the dynamic force bringing about the greatest revolution of all times."

That great moral and spiritual force can only come from Islam, the religion which does not divide the life of a man into water-tight compartments but which infuses a moral and spiritual value into every action of every day and which

is at once so practical and so all-embracing that it satisfies the needs of mankind in all stages of civilisation.

The Holy Quran says:

"Ye are the best society that hath been raised up to mankind, ye enjoin the right conduct and forbid the wrong and ye believe in Allah." (3:109).

The Holy Quran also says:

"We have appointed you a mediatory society that ye may be an example unto mankind even as the Messenger is an example unto you." (2:143).

In the world of to-day which shows the forces of atheist communism gathering together on the one hand and, on the other hand, the uncertain alliances of the West, the time is surely ripe for that "mediatory society" to which the Holy Quran refers. But before the Muslims of Africa, of the Middle East and of Asia can combine to follow that "middle way", the true way of Allah, they must first rediscover the spiritual and ethical values of Islam for themselves.

That Islam possesses within itself unique powers of revitalisation and regeneration is something which many young Muslims have, unfortunately, no desire to believe. They see how miserably backward and deprived are the lives of innumerable Muslim peasants and leap to the superficial conclusion that an Islamic society and an Islamic system of economics can serve no useful purpose in the modern world. Their talk in consequence, is all of Western technology and Western economics and they forget, or refuse to remember, that Islam has never been against progress or attempted to exclude technological inventions.

On the contrary, as the first part of this book has shown, Islam was the first of the world religions to encourage science and technology as it encouraged the pursuit of all branches of knowledge.

Technology itself, however, is not enough to offer mankind in its periods of struggle and crisis. Mankind must also be offered hope and many outstanding scholars, including some of the greatest thinkers of the West believe Islam to be the ultimate hope for the future of the whole world.

Some Western Views on Islamic Regeneration

The distinguished Hungarian Professor Germanus writes:

"The moral teachings of Islam are a sure guide to its rejuvenation.. . . These teachings are the pillars of every sound society: they disapprove of unreliability, lying and dishonesty; they condemn selfish exploitation of the helpless and severely punish theft and robbery. Talents and diligence are regarded as the unalienable property of the individual, as are the results of honest exertions. It is not slogans and hatred but serious work and self-discipline as enjoined by the Sunnah of the Prophet, which will pave the way towards the rejuvenation of the Islamic peoples."

Sir Wilfred Blunt in his book, *The Future of Islam* says:

"Islam has so much to offer to the children of Man that it cannot fail to win them—so much more than any form of Christianity or European progress can give."

Mr. W. E. Hocking writes:

"I feel justified therefore on my assertion that Islam contains in abundance the necessary principles for its growth. Indeed it may be said that until the middle of the 13th century Islam was the vehicle for whatever growth in civilization the Western world could boast of. Let me note that I am speaking here solely of Islamic Cannon Law, or Shariat, which is but a part of the actual law of a Muslim land. Islam has been peculiarly free to carry on its ordinary life on the basis of local custom and the decrees of the local rulers. Its rigidity lies chiefly in those personal and family matters which come close to the ethical sense of religion."

"*Islam aims at progress*" says Marmaduke Pickthal, in the passage that follows:

"Islam is a religion which specifically aims at human progress and shows the proper way of achieving it in a number of commands and prohibitions covering every avocation of man's daily life, his social life and politics as well as every prompting of his mind and spirit. These commands and prohibitions have been codified into a complete social and political system which has been practised with a success which is the great astonishment of history. Many writers have tried to explain away the amazing success of Islam by ascribing it to outside causes. But how will they explain the fact that *so long as the Muslims implicitly obeyed a particular injunction of the sacred law they succeeded in the sphere of that injunction, and whenever they neglected to obey it, they failed.*"

Theodore Morrison in his article "England and Islam" published in 1919, in the July issue of the "Nineteenth

Century and After" writes, "In truth, Islam is more than creed, it is a complete social system, it is a civilization with a philosophy, a culture and an art of its own and in its long struggle against the rival civilization of Christendom it has become an organic unit conscious of itself. No Muhammadan believes that Islamic civilization is dead or incapable of further development."

A great American scholar, Mr. Lothrop Stoddard in a study of racial and colour problems remarks :

"Broadly speaking, the Near East possesses a fundamental unity, that of Islam. The native Christian and Jewish minorities are local survivals from times long past. Now Islam is more than a creed; it is a culture and a way of life. However radically it may be modified by Westernism, Islam will remain the basis upon which new development will repose. Also Islam is not ossified or decadent as many Westerners assume. It is very much alive and it has long been in genuine evolution. The Islamic world touched its lowest depth or decrepitude two centuries ago. Thereafter began the movement known as the Muhammadan Revival—a spiritual leaven which never ceased to work, and which continues to work and which continues to produce the important effect. This survival, be it noted, was not due to Western impacts. *It sprang from Islam's own vitality.*"

The famous writer George Bernard Shaw believed Islam to be the most vital of all religions. Shaw wrote:

"I have always held that religion of Muhammad in the highest estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is *the only religion* which appears to me to possess that

assimilating capability to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him—the wonderful man—in my opinion far from being anti-Christ, he must be called a Saviour of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be accepted by the Europe of today."

In fact George Bernard Shaw went so far as to say that the Islamisation of Europe may be said to have begun.

"It was in the Nineteenth Century", writes Shaw, "that honest thinkers like Carlyle, Gibbon and Goethe perceived intrinisic worth in the religion of Muhammad—already, at the present moment, many of our people have gone over to his faith and the Islamisation of Europe may be said to have begun."

The widely published American Magazine *Life* devoted a great many pages of one of its issues in 1955 to a discussion and evaluation of Islam. Here too, the adaptability and vitality of that religion were praised.

"Islam, the youngest of man's great universal religion, is also in many ways the simplest, and most explicit. It venerates a single All-Powerful God, its founder Muhammad was neither a saviour nor a messiah but a man through whom God chose to speak."

"*Its continued strength and durability are derived from the nature of its appeal*—simple, lucid and affirmative—which

*Vide "Genuine Islam". Singapore, Vol. I. 1936.

preserved the unity of Islam through 1,300 years. For Islam is more than a formal religion: it is an all pervasive system of life, guiding thought and action to a degree without parallel in the Western world ......The conviction that God is Omnipresent Ruler and Omniscient Judge imparts to Muslims all over the world, a dignity and confidence that cannot fail to influence behaviour on the world scene. There can be no question that the way Islam turns will profoundly affect the future of the world and its more enlightened leaders are sensitively aware of this fact *The direction will depend in the last analysis on how successfully Islam can reconcile its faith with mutations of time and history. It is for this reason that many Muslims recognise that their spiritual problems are really crucial ones.* This Muhammad himself discerned when, returning from battle once told his followers:—"You come back from the lesser to the greater struggle." They asked—"What is that greater struggle O, Messenger of God." He replied—"The struggle within."

A distinguished sociologist, George Kisk, pays tribute to the way in which the Islamic *shariat* still provides a valuable social framework even in those Muslim societies where spiritual decay is at its most evident.

"Its (Islam's) importance in world civilization lies not so much in its undistinguished dogmatics *as in the cohesive force of the system of legal and social regulations for the direction* of the Muslim community, begun by the Prophet himself and incorporated in the Quran, and continued under the Khalifas in the form of Traditions. It was these regulations superimposed on the simple dogmatic founda-

tions that originally brought together the individualist Arab tribes as a conquering force that imposed a social unity upon national and cultural diversity of the Muslim world in its greatest days and that maintains a sense of unity even today after centuries of decay and neglect. The present machine-age may have undermined the belief of many educated Muslims in the dogmas of their religion but though they may have become free thinkers or even atheists they remain, notwithstanding, within the social community of Islam."

Monsieur Denis Saurat in his *History of Religions* writes:

"Muhammadanism is not unequipped for survival in the modern world. Its great principles are simple and rational: it carries less theology than Christianity and Buddhism. It is from another angle a more complete religion, it feeds on the political life of its people, whereas Christianity and politics are practically divorced. The Mussalmans are more attached to their religion than the Christians. It requires from them less effort and imposes fewer inhibitions on their nature."

The last two quotations assess Islam at its lowest value: they serve to show, however, that a valuable social framework already exists within which a spiritual revival could be carried out with comparative ease and speed. A somewhat different point of view is expressed by Professor Horton, a distinguished Arabic scholar, who sees this revival as "one of gradual inner action and harmony" and looks upon Islam as "capable of perpetual evolution, for the Muslim has always adjusted his religious outlook

to the elements of culture which he has assimilated from the people that surrounded him."

Another prominent orientalist says "The spirit of Islam is so broad that it is practically boundless. It has assimilated all the attainable ideas of the surrounding peoples and given them its own peculiar direction."

About the positive and spiritual achievements which Islam has to offer we can read the words of Mr. Kenneth H. Grandall, B.D., an ordained elder of the American Methodist (Christian) Church Mr. Grandall writes, in a series of articles called, *What they think of us* a special article called *The Impact of Islam on Christianity*. This was re-published in the April issue of the Islamic Review in 1956 and contained the following passage:

"Actually the Muslims are people who have something distinctive and positive to offer to the world community and they are demanding from the West a just response to their world citizenship on the basis of equality. Potentially Islam offers religious convictions regarding the nature of God, and man which are complementary to Christian understanding and are of great potential assistance in the re-organisation of the world-politics which the Christian world must carry through if it is to be true to its ideals."

The French Arabist, Monsieur Jacques C. Rister sees Islam as "the last rampart of independence" in the world of to-day. The Professor writes in his book, *La Civilisation Arabe:*

"To the unbiased observer, at a time when humanity seems to be forfeiting its most cherished liberties, under the odious pressure of economic supremacy or force of arms,

it is increasingly clear that Islam despite its hesitations and uncertainty regarding the future remains one of the last ramparts of Independence."

Mr. Abraham Moses, an eminent American educationist speaking to the Rotary Club at Dacca in March 1956 referred to the enduring qualities of Islam in these words:

"Islam is a religion for all times, it does not enjoin blind acceptance of dogmas, theories or principles but encourages exercise of the mind and the faculties with which God has endowed mankind".

Mr Moses also referred to the stimulating influence which Islam had exercised, in its early days, over contemporary thought and saw no reason why the decay of Islam in later days should be more than a temporary set-back. Any religion which encourages the pursuit of knowledge as Islam does must contain within itself the means of re-invigoration.

The historian, Gibbon, referred to by Bernard Shaw above, wrote these words about Islam

"It is not the propagation but the *permanency* of Islam that deserves our wonder, the same pure and perfect impression which Islam engraved at Mecca and Medinah is still preserved after the revolution of twelve centuries by the Indian, African and Turkish proselytes of the Quran."

Another English orientalist, Bosworth Smith, said succinctly, at the end of the Nineteenth Century:

"*Islam itself is a thing of indestructible vitality.*" Referring to some of the causes of its apparent decline Bosworth Smith went on to predict that it would:

"Thrive the more when rid of the magnificent corruption and the illusory prestige of the Stambul successors of the Prophet."

Let us now consider in more detail why Islam succeeded in the first place, why it failed to maintain its dominant place in history and why it may yet rise to heights of unsurpassed greatness.

Causes of the initial success of Islam

We must look for the deepest causes of the success of Islam within the tenets of the faith. This anthology is not, however, the place for intricate theological discussion and its purpose may best be served by only a very brief summary of the fundamental beliefs of Islam

Dr. J. H. Bridges, a famous Positivist, said of Islam:

"The faith of the Muslim is concentrated in a single word, *Islam*—devotion, resignation of our own will to the supreme degree . . . The word Islam unfolds itself for us, as for the followers of Muhammad into two great and inseparable aspects of life Prayer and Work 'Pray and give alms' said Muhammad. Alms giving in his wide interpretation of it, conceived with admirable wisdom and relative to the simple wants of his time, covered the whole field of doing good to men 'Pray and Work' said the medieval saint Pray as if nothing were to be done by Work. Work as though nothing were to be done by Prayer. . . Islam, or in the English tongue 'devotion'—the devotion of our life to the highest, the bringing of our own will into accord with the Supreme Will. This is the word (Islam) that sums up the lives of pious men in every age and every country."

Again and again we read in the works of the great thinkers of the world the same expressed admiration for the universality of Islam. Islam is the only religion which recognises but one distinction between man and man, that of behaviour. Unlike the Christian religion, it is not fettered by any doctrine of Original Sin, believing, on the contrary, that all human beings, male and female, are born pure and that all virtuous people may achieve salvation.

Sir Charles Edward Archibald Hamilton remarks, "Islam teaches the inherent sinlessness of man. It teaches that man and woman came from the same essence, possess the same soul and have been equipped with equal capacities for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments."

Here then is the basic message of hope. All people have equal opportunities of success both in this world and the hereafter provided they attempt to lead a virtuous life. For their practical guidance Islam offers them, in the *shariat*, detailed advice and instruction on how best to lead a good life, for, under Islam, no one is asked to renounce life; no austerities are to be practised to open a secret door to purification; no pressure is exerted upon the mind to believe incomprehensible dogmas in order to secure salvation. Of all religions, Islam alone makes it possible for a man to enjoy the full range of earthly satisfactions without for one moment losing his sense of spiritual orientation. Indeed it is the supreme achievement of Islam that it has completely co-ordinated the spiritual and the material aspects of human life in the one greater unity. In the words of Professor Gibb:

"Islam is a fully rounded society based on religion and comprehending every aspect of human life."

Dr. Gustav Weil writes of Islam as "strong with the strength of immortality."

"True", says Dr. Weil, "the political power of Islam has ebbed, but its spiritual power is as young and vigorous today as it was when first launched on its wondrous world-wide career. What is the secret of Islam's success? The secret consists in its remarkable freedom from the fetters of priestcraft; freedom from the fetters of embarrassing rituals and bewildering articles of faith. Islam is simplest of all revealed religions and it is therefore a religion compatable with the highest and lowest grade of civilisation".

Draper, in his *History of Intellectual Development of Europe* remarks:

"It (Islam) was an exception in the sense that, except for the intervention of divine sanction, it contained less of religious dogmas and metaphysical speculations than *sound political sense, progressive social principles* and an admirable code of personal behaviour. He (Muhammad) did not engage in vain metaphysics but applied himself to improving the social condition of the people by regulations respecting personal cleanliness, sobriety, fasting and prayer. Above all other works, he esteemed alms-giving and charity. With a liberality to which the world of late became a stranger he admitted *the salvation of men of any form of faith provided they were virtuous*."

Mr. M. N. Roy analyses the causes of the success of Islam as follows:

"The phenomenal success of Islam was primarily due to its revolutionary significance and to its ability to lead the masses out of the hopeless situation created by the decay of the antique civilisation not only of Greece and Rome but of Persia and China and of India. The sword of Islam wielded ostensibly at the service of God, actually contributed to the victory of a new social force—to the blossoming of a new intellectual life which was eventually to prove the grave of all religions and faiths......The expansion of Islam is the most miraculous of all miracles. The Roman Empire of Augustus, as later enlarged by the valiant Trojan, was the result of great and glorious victories, won over a period of seven hundred years. Still it had not attained the proportions of the Arabian Empire established in less than a century. The empire of Alexander represented but a fraction of the vast domain of the Khalifas. For nearly a thousand years, the Persian Empire resisted the arms of Rome, only to be subdued by the "Sword of God" in less than a decade.

The great historian Edward Gibbon summarises the history of Islamic expansion in the following vigorous passage:—

"One is simply amazed to contemplate the incredible rapidity with which the two mightiest empires of the ancient time were subverted by the comparatively small bands of the nomads from the Arabian desert, fired with the zeal of a new faith (Islam). Hardly fifty years had passed since Muhammad assumed the role of the singular Prophet spreading the message of peace his followers victoriously planted the banner of Islam on the

shores of Atlantic on the one side and on the confines of India on the other side. The first Khalifa of Damascus reigned over an Empire which could not be crossed in less than five months on the fleet of camel. At the end of the first century of Hijrah, the commanders of the faithful were the most powerful rulers of the world."

Gibbon also refers to Islam "as one of the great Revolutions which has impressed a new and lasting character on the nations of the globe."*

H. A. L. Fisher in his world-famous *History of Europe* also refers to the revolutionary nature of Islamic success. Mr. Fisher writes:

"Nowhere was there any vestige of an Arabian State, of a regular army or of a common political situation. The Arabs were poets, dreamers, fighters, traders; they were not politicians. Nor had they found in religion a stabilising or unifying plan. They practised a low form of polytheism. A hundred years later (when they adopted Islam) these obscure savages had achieved for themselves a great world power. They had conquered Syria and Egypt—they had overwhelmed and converted Persia, mastered western Turkistan and part of the Punjab. They had wrested Africa from the Byzantines and the Berbers, Spain from the Visigoth. In the West they threatened France and in the East Constantinople. Their fleets, built in Egypt or the Syrian ports, rode the waters of the Mediterranean, pillaged the Greek Islands and challenged the naval power of the Byzantine Empire Their success had been won so easily, the Persians and the Berbers of the Atlas Mountains

*For the special influence exerted by Islam on Hindu Society see Appendix

alone offering a serious resistance, that at the beginning of the eighth century, it must have seemed an open question whether any final obstacle could be opposed to their victorious course. The Mediterranean had ceased to be a Roman lake. From one end of Europe to the other, the Christian States found themselves confronted with the challenge of a new Oriental Civilisation founded on a new oriental faith—Islam."

Another modern historian says:

"The revolt of Islam saved humanity ... Islam was a necessary product of history, an instrument of human progress. It rose as the ideology of a new social relationship, which, in its turn, revolutionised the mind of man."

Philip Hitti gives a vivid picture of the vitality of Islam in these early, revolutionising days in the passage that follows:

"If someone in the first third of the Seventh Christian century had had the audacity to prophesy that within a decade some unheralded unforeseen power from the hitherto barbarous and little known land of Arabia was to make its appearance, hurl itself against the only two world powers of the age, fall heir to the one, —the Sasanid— and strip the other —the Byzantine —of its fairest provinces, he would undoubtedly have been declared a lunatic. Yet that was exactly what had happened. After the death of the Prophet, sterile Arabia seems to have been converted as if by magic into a nursery of heroes the like of whom both in numbers and quality is hard to find anywhere. The military campaigns of Khalid Ibn Walid and Amr-Ibn-al-Aas which ensued in al-Irak, Persia, Syria and Egypt are among

the most brilliantly executed in the history of war-fare and bear favourable comparison with those of Napoleon, Hannibal or Alexander."*

But it was not merely the revolutionary doctrines of Islam, nor the military brilliance of its leaders which contributed to its spectacular successes. It was, over and over again, the willingness and eagerness of the peoples of the world to accept its message of hope that proved to be the ultimate cause of victory.

Professor Finlay in his "History of the Byzantine Empire" writes, "In almost every case in which the Saracens conquered a Christian nation, history unfortunately reveals that they owed their success chiefly to the fervour with which this progress was regarded by the masses of the conquered people.

To the disgrace of the most Christian Governments, it will be found that their administration was more oppressive than that of the Arab conquerors. The inhabitants of Syria welcomed the followers of Muhammad, the Copts of Egypt contributed to place their country under the domination of Arabs and the Christian Berbers aided the conquest of Africa. Everywhere the Saracen invaders were welcome as deliverer by peoples oppressed, tyrannised and tormented by the Byzantine corruption and Persian despotism and Christian superstition. Fanatically faithful to the revolutionary teachings of the Prophet and obediently acting according to the noble, wise and eminently practical injunctions of the Khalifas, the Saracen invaders easily

* Philip K Hitti History of the Arab page 142

enlisted the sympathy and support of the peoples they conquered No invader can establish an abiding domination over the conquered peoples except with their active support or tacit toleration."

H. G. Wells in his *History of the World* explains the willingness of the conquered peoples to accept Islam as follows:

"And if the reader entertains any delusions about a fine civilisation, either Persian, Roman, Hellenic or Egyptian being submerged by this (Islam) flood, the sooner he dismisses such ideas, the better.—*Islam prevailed because it was the best social and political order the times could offer.* It prevailed because everywhere it found politically apathetic people, robbed, oppressed, bullied, uneducated and unorganised and it found selfish and unsound governments out of touch with any people at all. It (Islam) was the broadest, freshest, and cleanest political idea that had yet come into actual activity in the world and it offered better terms than any other to the masses of mankind. The capitalistic and slave-holding system of the Roman Empire and the literature and culture and social tradition of Europe had altogether broken down before Islam arose and it was only when mankind lost faith in the sincerity of its representatives that Islam too began to decay."

Elsewhere, in his *Outline of History* H. G. Wells analyses the essential appeal of Islam. After reproducing the last sermon of the Holy Prophet, Wells continues:

"This insistence on kindness and consideration in daily life is one of the main virtues of Islam, but it is not the only one. Equally important is the monotheism, void

of any Jewish exclusiveness, which is sustained by the Quran. Islam from the outset was fairly proof against the theological elaborations that have perplexed and divided Christianity and smothered the spirit of Jesus. And its third source of strength has been in the meticulous prescription of methods of prayer and worship and its clear statement of the limited and conventional significance of the importance ascribed to Mecca. All sacrifice was barred to the faithful, no loophole was left for the sacrificial priest of the old dispensation to come, back into the new faith (Islam). It was not simply a new faith, a purely prophetic religion as the religion of Jesus was in the time of the Jews or the religion of Goutama in the lifetime of Goutama but it was so stated as to remain so. Islam to this day has learned doctors, teachers and preachers but has no priest. It was full of the spirit of kindness, generosity and brotherhood; it was a simple and understandable religion, and it made its appeal straight to the commonest instincts in the composition of ordinary men. Against it were pitted Judaism which has made a racial board of God, Christianity, talking and preaching endlessly, now of trinities doctrines, and heresies, no ordinary man could make head or tail of and Mazdaism, the cult of the Zoroastrian Magi who had inspired the crucifixion of Mani. What appealed to them was that this God, Allah, he preached was by the test of conscience in their hearts—a God of righteousness and that the honest acceptance of this doctrine and method opened the door wide, in a world of uncertainty, treachery, and intolerable division to a great and increasing brotherhood of trustworthy men

on earth and to a paradise not of perpetual exercises in praise and worship in which saints, priests, and annointed kings were still to have the upper places but of equal fellowship and simple and understandable delights such as their souls craved for. Without any ambiguous symbolism, without any darkening of altars or chanting of priests, Muhammad has brought home those attractive doctrines to the heart of mankind."

G. D. Denison in his book, *Emotion as the Basis of Civilisation* also sees the success of Islam in terms of a new unifying force:

"It seemed that the great civilisation, which it had taken four thousand years to construct, was on the verge of disintegration, and that mankind was likely to return to a state of barbarism in which every tribe and sect was against one another. The new sanctions created by Christianity were working divisions and destructions instead of unity and concord. Was there any emotional culture that could be brought in to gather mankind once more into unity and save civilisation? It was in these circumstances that was born the man who was to unite the world—the Holy Prophet Muhammad."

Even in its most triumphant days, however, a study of Islamic history shows that periods of success were sometimes followed by periods of stagnation, but at no time in the past did Islam fail to reveal those powers of revival and recuperation upon which the world of the Twentieth Century must once again rely. As one of the most eminent historians, Mr. Gibbon writes:

"From a study of the ups and downs of the wordly power of Islam, one shining fact emerges—wherever the Islamic kingdom declined, a fresh race swelled the Islamic armies to revive the fading glory of Islam Such happened not once but many times in the annals of Islam. When the power of the Abbasid Khalifa dwindled almost to nothing in the reign of Saljuq Tughril (1060 A.C.), his nephew Alp Arslan (1037 to 1060 A.C.) and later his son Sultan Malik Shah (1072 to 1092 A.C.) saw the most brilliant period of Islam's rule. A new race from Central Asia was now pouring its blood into the struggle for Islam's bid for world supremacy. The story of those Barbarian infidels, setting their feet on the necks of the followers of the Prophet and at the same time accepting the religion of the Muslim and becoming its ardent champions was not a unique instance in the chequered annals of Islam. Their cousins, the Moghuls of the thirteenth Century as well as their other kinsmen the Ottoman Turks of the Fourteenth Century repeated the same process and played the same part in the revival of the fading glory of Islam. In the darkest hour of political Islam, religious Islam has been able to achieve some of its most brilliant victories."

Another prominent historian, gives a suitably vigorous description of the process of re-vitalisation at work in Thirteenth Century Islam

"Hard pressed between the mounted archers of the wild Moghals in the east and the mailed knights of the crusaders on the west, Islam in the early part of the Thirteenth Century seemed for ever lost. How different was the situation in

the last part of the century' *Islam phoenix-like again recovered when all seemed lost for ever* The last crusader had by that time been driven into the sea. The seventh of the Ilkhans, many of whom had been flirting with Christianity, had finally recognised Islam as the State religion -a dazzling victory for Islam. Just in the case of the Saljuqs, the religion of the Muslim had conquered where there arms had failed Less than half a century after Halagu's merciless attempt at the destruction of Islamic culture and civilisation, his great grandson Ghazan as a devout Muslim was consecrating much time and energy to the revivification of that same culture of Islam. However it was not the Mongols who were destined to restore the military glory of Islam and unfurl its banner triumphantly over new and vast territories This was left to their kinsmen, the Ottoman Turks, the new champion of Islam. The Turkish empire under Sulayman the Magnificent (1520 to 66 C E) stretched from Baghdad on the Tigris to Budapest on the Danube and from Aswan near the first cataract of the Nile almost to the Strait of Gibraltar."

Reasons for the Decay of Islam

In recent years there has been a fashionable theory amongst certain historians that any nation or civilisation which achieves domination at one period of history must inevitably bring about its own decay and downfall. This theory might, at first sight, seem applicable to the decline and fall of the Islamic Empire were it not for the fact that history has shown again and again that Islam has always carried within itself the seeds of re-generation.

Nor need Islam be subject to the same organic laws of decay as other civilisations, for Islam, it must not be forgotten, is not man-made: it was revealed by Allah for all time. In those periods of history when men have disobeyed and neglected the laws of Allah, Islam has appeared to decline but the moment men have returned to the true faith Islam has proved itself as strong as ever.

For this reason the French historian Pierre Loti looks upon these periods of decline rather as "periods of slumber". Having paid tribute to the way in which Islamic civilisation "evolved and progressed with the nations, and the stimulus it gave to men in the reign of the ancient Khalifs", Monsieur Loti continues:

"To impute to it (Islam) the present decadence of the Muslim world is altogether too puerile. The truth is that nations have their day and to a period of glorious splendour succeeds a time of lassitude and slumber."

The German historian Von Kremer sees the causes of decline in terms of internal quarrels between Moslem powers:

"Islamic empires were dismembered into petty principalities, the rulers of which were [illegible] among themselves and were constantly at war with each other. Such was the position of affairs in the Islamic world when at the end of the Eleventh Century the army of the Crusaders marched through Asia Minor. The dissension of the Moslem Princes made the conquests of Jerusalem easy."

Nevertheless, as Von Kremer also points out, about one hundred years later, when Islam was [illegible] by the hordes of Chenghis Khan and all seemed [illegible]

forever, the Muslims recovered their strength, awoke from their lassitude and slumber, gathered together their forces and achieved a new series of dazzling victories. Von Kremer goes on to say:

"*Not by arms but by religious ideal did Islam vanquish the northern conqueror. There must indeed be some tremendous power in this semitic religion which enables it not only to weather world-shattering storms but emerge out of them firmer, stronger and more vigorous than ever.*"

Here, in this passage, Von Kremer puts his finger on the true cause of Islamic success and, at the same time, on the true cause of Islamic failure. The success of Islam in its early days was due to the all-consuming religious fervour of the early Muslims and their adherence to Islamic teachings in the conduct of their affairs. To this religious fervour and religious discipline were added other sentiments such as national pride, racial dignity and individual confidence, but it was religion which provided the mainspring for all these activities.

In the course of time, however, an over-emphasis on certain details and an immoderate fanaticism contrary to the true spirit of Islam, led to schisms within the faith and to the formation of numerous sects. Muslim society was corrupted and degraded by a hierarchy of pseudo-priests and alien traditions borrowed from the Persians and the Greeks. This, in turn led to the development of an autocracy entirely contrary to the true principles of Islam, and also to the growth of a great deal of mass superstition and to many un-Islamic practices which grew up to obscure the true principles of the faith. The growth of an extreme

mediaeval scholasticism further complicated and concealed the original purity of Islam, leading ultimately to a revulsion against the acquisition of any form of new knowledge whatsoever and to a stagnation of mind and spirit. The doctrine of fatalism preached by some of the most reactionary of the theologians also contributed to the inertia and torpor which now prevailed. The more fanatic and reactionary some of the Muslims became, the more sceptical and full of doubt were the others until in the end the common ties of a common faith were loosened and political and religious disruption ensued. The Caliphate was split into fragments and where, before, there had been cohesion, both religious and political, there now remained only chaos.

The new autocracy of petty rulers wished only to live in un-Islamic luxury and self-indulgence. Whereas in the early days of Islam, as in the reign of Abu Bakr,* there had been devoted service and pious integrity there was now only vice, corruption and despotism. As H. G. Wells pointed out it was only when mankind lost faith in the sincerity of its representatives that Islam too began to decay."

Ignoring the injunctions of the Holy Quran, these petty rulers began to impose crushing burdens of taxation on their subjects. So impossible did this burden become that some three hundred years after the death of the Holy Prophet one Arab tribe, the Banu Habib, consisting of over twelve thousand people, chose to become Christians and migrated to the Roman Empire.

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*For an example of Abu Bakr's integrity see *Appendix* p. 24[illegible].

Small wonder that, under such conditions, Islam lost its vitality and fell into a state of decay. Yet, if the Muslim peoples had only followed the injunctions of the Holy Quran, reaction need never have taken the place of progress. The Holy Prophet himself had said, "The merit of knowledge is superior to that of devotion" and if the Quranic precepts had not been neglected the Muslims of to-day would not be amongst the most backward and least educated of peoples.

The causes of the failure of the Muslim peoples were summed up with wisdom and with wit, by the great Muslim reformer Syed Jamaluddin Afghani. On one occasion a member of a large audience asked this question, "What is the main cause of the decline and downfall of the Muslims"? To this Syed Jamaluddin replied, "Abandonment of Religion". The questioner then pressed for an answer to a second question. "What then," he said, "is the chief cause of the rise of the Christians". Again Syed Jamaluddin Afghani replied, "Abandonment of Religion". The whole audience was amazed and people began to ask how abandonment of religion could produce such diametrically and basically opposed results. Thereupon the great reformer explained to them as follows

"Islam is a religion of progress so when the Muslims discarded their religion they ceased to progress: whereas Christianity is merely a system of theology and spiritualism which ignores the secular side of life. By abandoning their Bible the Christians were able to rise to power and to make material progress; by abandoning the Holy Quran the Muslims brought about their downfall and decline."

The Spirit of Islam in Muslim Missions

At no time, since the beginnings of Islam, has its light been totally extinguished on earth. Often when it has seemed forever lost in one part of the world it has blazed out brilliantly in another part. Indeed no Muslims have done more to keep alive the Faith in all the purity of its early days, than its dedicated missionaries in Asia and Africa. It is as a result of such endeavours that Indonesia is to-day a stronghold of Islam and a demonstration, in a multi-racial society, of the kind of tolerance and forbearance originally enjoined by the Holy Quran. When the great explorer Marco Polo arrived in Indonesia in 1292 A.C. he remarked on the arrival of a new religion that had just come from India and was "sweeping the islands". To-day Indonesia is next to Pakistan, the world's largest Islamic nation. The Philippines also furnish the most eloquent testimony to Islam's powers of survival. Islam was not spread through the Philipines by any conquering army but by a handful of peaceable Muslim missionaries and this at a time when the Spanish rulers of the Sixteenth Century were bent on forcibly converting the people to Christianity. At a period of history when Muslims were being expelled from Spain and the power of Islam had declined in all the countries of the Mediterranean, Muslim missionaries on the other side of the world were courageously spreading the message of Allah and achieving superb results in the face of formidable opposition. To-day more than thirteen lakhs of the inhabitants are professed Muslims, a truly remarkable triumph for Islam.

In Africa too, Islam has been constantly spreading and with the same zeal and fervour that characterised the days of early conversions in Arabia and Syria, its people are still turning to the one religion that offers them true equality in the sight of God and of man. According to a Christian newspaper published in Lagos, West Africa, on Feb 8th 1956, "Islam is progressing ten times more rapidly than Christianity in Nigeria."

Of Central Africa, Sir Wilfred Blunt has said in *The Future of Islam*,

"Central Africa may then be counted as the inheritance of Islam at no very distant date."

Of the triumph of Islam in East Africa Bosworth Smith has written a most moving account which merits quotation at length.

The Spread of Islam in East Africa

"By the dawn of the Fourteenth Century" says Bosworth Smith "the fair citadels of Islamic civilisation lay like a string of lustrous pearls along the green cushion of the verdant coast of East Africa, their marts busy with merchants and sea-farers and caravan trafficking in ivory, spices, gum and gold from the Sofilan mines. Barbrosa's account of these thriving ports of East Africa during the heyday of Islamic civilization stands as sufficient evidence of the great commercial and industrial prosperity and of the high standard of living and domestic learning which Islamic civilization brought to East Africa. These magnificent cities were more than merchants' marts. They had become the home of the arts. In the *diwan* or assembly-hall of their mansions, learning and literature took pride of

place. By the wealth in his ware-house a man might be adjudged, but here it was by the wealth in the store-house of his mind as a poet, a priest, a theologian, that he won that renown, respect and esteem which was called *heshima*. The Perso-Arabian settlers brought the art of learning to enlighten the whole of Eastern Africa.

"In Eastern Africa as indeed elsewhere, it has always been one of the greatest attributes of Islamic civilisation that it has encouraged [illegible] distinction to cultivate and express their minds, to reveal the flowers of thought and those treasured concepts enwrapt in their souls. Nor was the liberty of speech confined to the poetic vein which produced upon this coast romantic and heroic verses of great vigour and grace, religious and homiletic works, inspired by [illegible] faith and piety. Servants and slaves were encouraged [illegible] to expound [illegible] to bear the rights which he felt were the just dues of his [illegible] and to [illegible] the wrongs from which he felt they suffered. The literature of this period reflects in a strong manner the free and democratic spirit of the people, their love of [illegible], their hatred of oppression and their determination to preserve their freedom against all odds.

"This ingrained spirit of unrestricted freedom and right of free speech have been treasured privilege of the Islamic civilization throughout East Africa but the glorious Edifice of Civilization and Democracy built by Islam was ruthlessly destroyed by the so-called followers of Western civilization namely the Portuguese invaders in East Africa. Mombasa, a most flourishing city with its civilization was

burnt five times, its people were either put to the sword or carried into slavery. Yet, the spirit and living force of Islamic civilization was so ever-lasting and abiding that it rose phoenix like again and again from its smoking ashes and pulled to the ground... The Sheikhs were put to the sword. By fire and sword and torture and bloodshed there was brought to virtual ruin the noble edifice of commerce and art which the Muslims of the coast had built with so much courage, faith and pride over the course of centuries. Islam was put to the test.

"The Portuguese reign of two centuries of terror and oppression passed like a nightmare and Islam awoke to a new dawn in 1699 A.C. The ruined cities arose afresh from the ashes; the merchant, sea-farers and coastal traders resumed anew their ancient traffic with Oman, Persia, India and Arabia and turned their eyes to the promised new commerce with Europe. The Islamic spirit of a new freedom, stirred men's souls and found voice in a great literary revival. A wave of fervour and enthusiasm animated and stirred Islam throughout Africa and resulted in such brilliant works as the Hamziya of Saud Aiddams-al-Sheikh.

To-day Muslims in every town and village throughout Tanganyika have risen again.

"In the triumph of Islam in Africa we see the same pattern of conquest through ideas and the same survival in the face of persecution that has characterised other phases of Islamic history. Can anyone, reading the account quoted above seriously doubt that Islam possesses within itself phoenix-like powers of regeneration and a truly indestructible vitality."

The Future of Islam is the Responsibility of Every Muslim

What then of the future? What are the hopes of a successful revival of the faith, of a great spiritual awakening and a new world leadership?

The responsibility for future successes rests with each individual Muslim. According to Islam Man is always free to act but the responsibility for these actions, whether they be good or bad, rests ultimately with man. The Holy Quran says:

"Allah does not change the condition of any nation unless it changes its own condition (by their own actions and conduct). Allah does not withdraw His favour from any nation and change its condition (unless the nation itself changes its own condition)."

From this it is clear that Allah only helps a nation in its good deeds. Elsewhere the Holy Quran says: "Men shall have nothing but what they strive for", and again:

"*Then We make you the successors of the Earth in place of others that We may see how ye act.*"

How then, is a Muslim of to-day expected to act? The answer to that question is a simple and straight-forward one: he must act in accordance with the injunctions of the Holy Quran. It was for this reason that the great Islamic poet Iqbal used as a rallying-cry the slogan "Back to the Quran."

"Back to the Quran" as a progressive formula for modern living

No-one knew better than Iqbal how sadly the true ideals of Islam have been neglected and how necessary to all Muslim hopes for the future is the revival of a true belief

in the faith "Islam alone can create a new world" he wrote Asia could never give its allegiance to "a wholly political system which has looked upon man as a thing to be exploited", such as that practised by Soviet Russia, nor could it ever "comprehend modern Western capitalism with its undisciplined individualism" Iqbal saw in Islam a system, based on religion, which at once recognised the worth of the individual and yet urged him to discipline himself in the service of Allah

"This faith", he wrote, "can create a new world where the social rank of man is not determined by his caste or colour or the amount of dividends he earns but by the kind of life he lives, where the poor tax the rich, where human society is founded, not on the equity of stomachs but on the equality of spirits, where an untouchable can marry the daughter of a king, where private ownership is a trust and capital cannot be allowed to accumulate so as to dominate the real producers of wealth."

In such a context the slogan, *Back to the Quran*, can scarcely be regarded as retrogressive. On the contrary, the only way in which Muslims can go forward and achieve progress is in "the way of Allah; that way they can only follow if they will allow themselves to refer back to the precepts embodied in the Holy Quran".

Unfortunately many of our young men to-day are so eager for progress that the mere mention of the word "back" makes them shudder They prefer to keep moving even if they do not know where they are going or to what end. Yet if they would but pause long enough for reflection, long enough to refresh their memories and to re-discover

and re-evaluate the precepts of Islam, then surely they might yet realise that "Back to the Quran" is the most progressive of all formula for modern living

There is no sign in the world that Western civilisation has produced a better system of ethics than that of Islam. It has not been able to put the idea of human brotherhood or the universal brotherhood of all mankind on a practical footing as Islam has done in its conception of 'Ummat'. The Western world has failed to evolve a social structure with a classless human society in which all conflicts, clashes of interest and frictions and feuds can be effectively reduced or eliminated, yet Islam put forward such a social plan some thirteen hundred years ago. The culture of the West has not been able to secure the equality of all human beings as Islam has done In all these respects modern Western civilization has failed to achieve the integration of all human beings in a common world community Indeed it has, on the contrary created bitter jealousies, rivalry, separatist tendencies, acute national feelings, feelings of class and racial superiority, and, on the other hand of racial inferiority. As a result the peoples of this world are today standing on the edge of a volcano In other words the achievements of the so-called "progressive" civilizations of the West fail far short of the Islamic programme Where then is the justification for believing and saying that **"Islam is out-dated"?**

The nations of the West have made great progress in science and in learning but their progress has not brought them Peace and their peoples, instead of looking forward eagerly to the future, live in the constant dread of a des-

tructive war. Islam alone can offer Peace to mankind. "Human disasters", says the Holy Quran, "are the work of human doings and are not from any ill-fate". Human benefits are equally the result of the determination of individuals and nations to live a good life. Man must be reformed from within, if future wars are to be avoided and Islam alone provides both the incentive and the rules of conduct which make such a reformation possible.

Islam offers to mankind a Supreme Authority and Divinity to whom mankind is accountable and from whom just retribution is to be expected, it stands for the dignity and equality of every human being, it abhors the idea of nationalism which is the main source of world tension to-day; it deplores racial hatreds, pleading instead for one universal brotherhood. As the Holy Prophet has said: "Humanity in its entirety is the family of Allah. His message is '*Become*' true servants of Allah and become brothers among yourselves."

"Become true servants of Allah", that is the message which is basic to Islam but to do so means submission, discipline and a life of constant endeavour. Islam is not a magic wand to be waved so that the world will suddenly become perfect: it is an orderly, progressive system that all who have a mind to may easily follow provided they will allow themselves to take the advice which the Holy Quran and the Traditions offer.

Long ago a Muslim ambassador was sent to the Shahinshah of Persia to demand his surrender. "Who are you to attack my empire", the Shah cried out "You of all peoples the poorest, most disunited, most ignorant". The Am-

bassador replied, "All you say was once true. The Arabs were clothed in the hair garments of beasts, their food was green lizards; they buried their infant daughters alive; they feasted on dead carcases and drank warm blood, they slew their relatives and boasted of the property they stole; we knew not good from evil nor could we tell what was lawful and what was unlawful. We were fighting blood feuds and robbery, loot, drink, women treachery, falsehood were our lives' greatest assets. All these are now gone from us because of the teachings of Islam and the precepts of our Holy Prophet. Allah in His great Mercy has sent to us a Holy Prophet who has given us a sacred Book which teaches us the only way to live and so has altered all our lives."

Of this sacred book the German historian Deutsch has said:

"The Quran is the book by the aid of which the Arabs came to Europe as kings to hold up the light to humanity when darkness lay around."

The Holy Quran has not changed. It is the book by the aid of which the Muslims of to-day may once again hold up the light to humanity. Of all the great religions of the world Islam alone offers hope to the whole of mankind. Muslim youth may take a just and proper pride in their great heritage and, strong in the knowledge that the true glories of Islam are enduring and eternal, should resolve to face the future not with complacency but with inspired resolution.

APPENDIX

Two examples of integrity in public life during the early days of Islam

The First Caliph, Abu Bakr, was scrupulously honest and was always at great pains never to accept anything from the Central Treasury beyond his most modest needs.

History records that on one occasion his wife asked him to buy sweets for her. He replied that he had no money. Then she said, "Have I your permission to save and lay by something for our daily allowances?" This he permitted and after a few days she had managed to save a few pieces which she then handed over to her husband for the purchase of sweets for her. To her consternation, however, the great Caliph told her that the very fact that she had been able to save any money at all showed that they were drawing a daily allowance which was in excess of their minimum requirements. He pr[illegible] the money to the *Bait-ul-mal* and henceforth a[illegible] as their allowance a sum which represented the original allowance reduced by the extent of the money saved.

The historian Gibbon was a great admirer of Abu Bakr, of whom he wrote:

"There are few figures in history more romantic, more devout, more sincere and more modest than the first Commander of the Faithful—Abu Bakr. His memorable injunction to the army of God ran: "Be just, the unjust never prosper. Be valiant, die rather than yield. Be

merciful, slay neither old men nor women nor children. Destroy neither fruit trees nor grains nor cattle. Keep your words even to your enemy. Molest not those men who live retired from the world." The irresistible march of the Army of God bears testimony to this remarkable injunction uttered sincerely by the venerable chief and obeyed strictly by the devout followers.

It is further recorded that one day Hazrat Abu Bakr asked his daughter, Ayesha, the widow of the Holy Prophet how much money he had drawn from the treasury. She replied that, during his reign, he had accepted only six thousand dirhams -about fourteen hundred rupees. He then ordered that the only piece of land he owned should be sold immediately and the sum mentioned refunded to the Treasury. "What else do I own", he then asked his daughter. She replied that he had an Abyssinian slave who, besides performing domestic duties, also polished swords for the Muslim warriors ; a camel which drew water and a single piece of cloth which he had purchased from savings made out of his modest "salary". These few belongings Abu Bakr asked his daughter to deposit, after his death, with the next Caliph. When they were brought to his successor, Hazrat Omar, the new Caliph wept and cried out: "O Abu Bakr you have made the task of your successor a difficult one indeed".

Hazrat Omar, however, proved himself an equally pious and worthy ruler. Of him a story is related which shows the spirit in which these early rulers accepted their great responsibilities. Hazrat Omar was seen, one day, by some important Arabs running hither and thither in a most

agitated state. Asked what was the matter he replied "A camel from the Public Treasury has fled". The Arabs replied, "But surely you have enough servants to search for this camel for you". To this, Hazrat Omar gave the spirited rejoinder -"Who is more a servant of the people than I myself".

Hazrat Omar was also a man of great humanity. One day he suddenly ascended the pulpit and said.

"There was a time when I was poor and needy and collected wages for my sustenance by carrying water as a common water-carrier" He then stepped down from the pulpit to answer the questions from his audience as to why he had suddenly spoken in that way. His reply was: "I felt a little pride in me so I thought the narration of my past state of destitution would remove that pride from me".

"Another ideal Muslim Caliph who lived many years later but who still maintained the ideals of the early Islamic rulers was Caliph Omar bin. Abdul Aziz. Although his Empire extended from the shores of the Atlantic to the high lands of Pamir, never forgot the example of humility and integrity set by the first Caliphs of Islam. The story is told that one day, when he was going through state documents in his private chamber, his equally pious wife Fatimah, the daughter of Caliph Abdul Malik, joined him for a private talk. Immediately he asked her to replace the Government lamp which he was burning with a private lamp of his own so that he might not waste Government light in private talk: Like the First Caliph, Abu Bakr, Caliph Omar also lived a very simple life, and one of scrupulous integrity. He deposited all his private wealth in the

public treasury, drawing only enough for his needs. One day a member of his family found him much cast-down and dejected and on asking why this was so received the reply "What do you think? Is it not a matter of immense worry to me that I have been entrusted with the well-being and good of this vast empire. Do you not realise that I shall fail in my duty if I do not help every needy person." On another occasion he was found weeping after prayers by his wife Fatimah, to whose enquiries he replied –"O, Fatimah, I have been made ruler over vast numbers of Muslims and Non-Muslims. I was thinking of the poor, the starving, the sick and suffering, the destitute, the naked of all those who are in distress, and of the oppressed and the stricken and of the strangers who are in prison, of the venerable elder and of him who has a large family and only a small income and the like of them in my Empire. I feel that Allah would ask me to give an account of my activities for the welfare of my subjects on the day of Resurrection. I fear I may fail to give a proper account to Allah".

In a truly Islamic State corruption and tyranny have no place. Instead the leaders of the nation seek only to serve, with charity and piety, the humblest of their people, always remembering that, in the sight of Allah, all men are created equal. In this the noble precedent was set by the Holy Prophet.

Some Western Opinions on the Greatness of the Holy Prophet

No more glowing tribute has been paid to the Holy Prophet than the one by Dr. Gustav Weil quoted in the following passage:—

"Muhammad set a shining example to his people. His character was pure and stainless: his house, his dress, his food —they were characterised by a rare simplicity. So unpretentious was he that he would receive from his companions no special mark of reverence, nor would he accept any service from his slave which he could do himself. Often and often he was seen in the market purchasing provisions; often and often he was seen in mending his clothes in his room or milking a goat in his court-yard. He was accessible to all and at all times. He visited the sick and was full of sympathy for all. Unlimited was his benevolence and generosity as also was his anxious care for the welfare of the community. Despite innumerable presents which from all quarters unceasingly poured in for him he left very little behind and even that he regarded as State Property..... But if Muhammad, as a man, stands as a peak of humanity his work, no less, is strong with the strength of immortality".

The American writer, Washington Irving remarked:

"All his glorious achievements, including the most brilliant triumphs which he accomplished in his life awakened no pride or vainglory as they would have done had they been effected for selfish purposes."

The French poet, Lamartine, said of him:

"As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured we may ask—is there any man greater than he. Indeed, Muhammad is the one great man without whom the world would appear incomplete. Truly, Muhammad stands to this day, and for all times to come, as the peak of humanity."

In that glowing tribute Lamantine was echoing the words of the Holy Quran:—

"And verily thou (Hazrat Muhammad) (standest) on exalted standard of character. (Quran 68:4).

The Holy Quran also says:—

"Verily in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example for him who looketh up to Allah and the Last Day." (Quran 33:21).

Bosworth Smith, like many other great English scholars, was a fervent admirer of the Holy Prophet, of whom he wrote:

"In the shepherd, in the desert, in the Syrian trader, in the solitary life of mount Hira, in the reformer, in the minority of one, in the exile of Medina, in the acknowledged conqueror, in the equal of the Persian Chosroes and the Greek Herculius, we can still trace a substantial unity. I doubt whether any other man whose external conditions changed so much ever himself changed so little to meet them, the accidents are changed, the essence seems to me to be the same in all..... What was the main cause of this wonderful state of mind? It was his faith in Allah rather than any formal knowledge of psychiatry. History records how this illiterate founder of Islam led the destiny of many individuals and nations towards peace and progress. His teachings and life-example will ever remain and inspire men to follow the path of progress, happiness and peace and as guidance and mercy for humanity."

The famous French Sociologist Monsieur Le Bon said of him:

"Muhammad was the greatest revolutionary leader known to us. He has left an imprint on the whole course of human history which no man after him has been able to efface. Indeed he appeared at the cross-roads of human history and changed the course of human history."

The Hindu leader, Gandhi was also moved to pay tribute to the Holy Prophet of Islam:

"He was a great Prophet. He was brave and feared no man but God alone. He was never found to say one thing and do another. He acted as he felt. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission—those, and not the sword, carried everything before him and surmounted every obstacle".

The Influence of Islam on Hindu Society

Havel in his *Aryan Rule in India* says that the effect of the Muhammadan political-social creed on Hindu life was two-fold: "It decreased the rigour of the caste-system and aroused a revolt against it. It made the Sudra a free man and, potentially, a lord of the Brahmans. Like the Renaissance, it stirred up the intellectual waters, produced many strong men and some men of striking originality and developed a type of humanity full of 'joie de viore.'

THE END